

JOHN BULL



SHOOT FIRST!

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VICTOR CANNING**

do you
take
cold....



or do you
take
CROOKES!



Just one capsule a day—Taken regularly, Crookes Halibut Oil will help you to resist colds and 'flu. It is rich in 'protective' Vitamin A and 'sunshine' Vitamin D. From chemists only, 25 for 2/6, 100 for 8/6.

CROOKES HALIBUT OIL



ARTHIGON

DEEP PENETRATION CREAM

for the positive relief of
rheumatic
pains



FROM CHEMISTS ONLY



Sonia the Ballerina dances down to breakfast

SALLY (she says her stage name's Sonia) loves her Hi-Hat cut from a Quaker Puffed Wheat packet! And this week she dances down to breakfast. She knows that crispy-crunchy, nutty-flavoured Puffed Wheat's on the menu. What a contrast to last week! Sally was "fed up with always eating the same kind of cereal". Mother

could hardly coax her to eat any breakfast at all. Clever Mother to change to tastier, crisper Puffed Wheat. Now Sally (or Sonia, the Ballerina) has a plate of delicious Puffed Wheat—and then takes an "encore", too!

* Mother! That's another reason for buying Puffed Wheat. Kiddies love the Hi-Hats on all packets.

Puffed WHEAT



A fat chance of slimming

It isn't... it can't be Sally Brown!

Well, it is, darling. Why the surprise?

I never saw such a change in anyone. You've got so slim!

Yes, I suppose I have. I can't have seen you since Mary Smith's party when that new doctor's wife was telling me all about it.

No riddles now. What "it"?

Well, you know I'd resigned myself to middle age spread and putting on an inch a year until I got to 80 or so?

I do indeed—and I with you.

Anyway, I was airing the awful possibility to this woman and saying "Wait till you get to my age" and it turned out she was five years older and just looked the picture of youth because she uses a Rallie Health Belt. It's the most marvellous home massage treatment you can imagine. Well, you can see what it's done for me. I can certainly do that. But how does it work?

The easiest thing in the world—a belt that you put on and manipulate for precisely five minutes a day. No violent exercise—no diet—and all finished and done with first thing in the morning or last thing at night.

If it can do half as much for me, I can't wait to get one. And I feel so much fitter. John's so impressed he's started using it too.

Honestly! All I want to know is—how can I get one? You just write for their illustrated booklet to

Rallie Health Appliances Ltd. (Dept. 132Q.)
314 Euston Road, London, N.W.1



EDITORIAL

Take care on Friday

FIREWORKS fizzed and banged all round just a year ago as nine-year-old Keith Eatherton, of Greenwich, excited and thrilled, tucked three rockets into his belt for use later.

Sparks were flying, and one bit of burning residue touched off Keith's rockets. In a second he was enveloped in a fountain of fire, his clothes blazing. His life was saved by a neighbour, who rolled him on the ground to smother the flames.

KEITH did not realize that, unless they are carefully handled, even properly made fireworks are dangerous. So dangerous that this Friday at least 2,500 people will almost certainly be injured, there will be widespread damage to property, and the ambulance and fire services will have their busiest night.

Last Guy Fawkes night, the brigades of London and Middlesex were called to more than four hundred incidents. Some were blazes started by fireworks, others were bonfires which got out of control. Tragedy is never far round the corner when fireworks are carelessly made or handled.

Here is some life-saving advice from Mr. Roy Brock, a man who makes more than anybody else of Britain's £2 million annual output of fireworks.

"Follow scrupulously the instructions printed on each firework. Loud bangers should be laid on firm ground—not on a gravel path, or stones may be flung up. They should be lit only by adults or older boys, who should then stand clear; keep younger children well away.

"Don't hold the Golden Rain type of firework over a child's head and tell him to look up at the pretty effect. Burnt residue may go in his eye.

"Use an electric torch to see what is left in the box—and keep the lid on. Don't throw fireworks into the bonfire, and don't carry them in your pockets, in case a spark sets them off."

PARENTS should heed this good advice. They can also help to safeguard their children by buying only the fireworks of reputable firms, for unscrupulous manufacturers put dangerous rubbish on the market.

Shopkeepers, too, can help by observing the law that forbids the sale of fireworks to children under thirteen.

Since fireworks give so much pleasure once a year and can hardly be banned altogether, the responsibility for preventing injury rests mainly on the public. Only those in charge of children can prevent mishaps like that which befell Keith Eatherton.



MR. ROY BROCK
"Follow the instructions . . ."

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OVALTINE

helps to
establish a
Natural Sleep Routine

IT is generally agreed that a bedtime routine is essential if you are to achieve regular nights of natural, refreshing sleep. And the right hot beverage makes a valuable contribution to that routine. That is why countless thousands of people drink a cup of 'Ovaltine' every night.

Delicious 'Ovaltine' helps to relax nervous tensions and promote the conditions favourable to restful sleep. During sleep, it assists in providing nourishment to rebuild strength and vitality.

'Ovaltine' is made from Nature's best foods and fortified with additional vitamins. Remember that the overriding principle in the manufacture of 'Ovaltine' is quality. This is and always has been the first consideration.

No other beverage
can give you better sleep

1/6, 2/6 and 4/6 per tin

P.948A



not too dry, not too sweet



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always right
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choose

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FREE SPEECH

Wild oats bring promotion

APPPOINTMENT to an executive post was the crowning achievement of my career. For years I had studied in my spare time to fit myself for promotion.

Then my firm sent me as area manager to a Midlands town—and I learned that efficiency was not the only requirement for the job.

My position gave me a certain amount of local standing. I was asked to social functions and invited to join a club. I was expected to do much of the firm's business over the lunch table or on the golf links.

On these occasions I was like a fish out of water, for I had lost the knack of being sociable and had no talent for small-talk.

At fifty-two I am having to make myself go to cocktail parties that are misery for me, visit the cinema regularly, read novels—all things which, as a young man, I forced myself to go without for the sake of my career.

Acquiring a social personality is far harder than working for exams at night school. I can see now that a few wild oats sown when I was young would have helped my career more than some of the letters I have after my name.—A. K., Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire.

Battle Of Flowers

ONE explanation of the superstition that red and white flowers in the same vase foretell a death ("Free Speech," October 16) may be this.

In the Wars of the Roses, the colours of warring Yorkists and Lancastrians were white and red. A mixing of flowers of these colours would therefore be symbolical of war and bloodshed. — ROBERT STARLING, Ashford, Middlesex.

Under The Counter

THE variety of goods sold by ironmongers ("Free Speech," October 16) is child's play compared to handling the stock-in-trade of a pet shop.

During the summer, we sell chameleons to young women to take as "costume jewellery" to parties. Scientists call on us throughout the year for supplies of water fleas—for atomic energy research.

A few weeks before Christmas, one woman regularly buys a dozen budgerigars to give her friends as presents—after she has taught each



bird to say a few words appropriate to the personality of the friend concerned.

Customers often want repeat orders. Last year a man came in for a grey parrot, to replace one my grandfather sold his grandfather ninety years ago.

Our most nonchalant visitor came from a private zoo. I sold him a tin

of adders, warning him to keep the lid on tightly in case they escaped.

"I'm past worrying about adders," he said. "I've got a taxi full of black mambas waiting outside."—KENNETH ISAACS, St. Martin's Aquaria, Monmouth Street, London, W.C.2.

Request Stop

WHEN watching bus drivers in their isolated cabins, I have often visualized the possibility of an accident if the driver were taken ill at the wheel.

A bus has no form of emergency brake outside the driver's cabin. If such an installation is not practicable, then at least the conductor should have access to the cabin.—J. E. RAINE, Airdrie, Lanarkshire.

London Transport says that the driver is the only person in a position to operate a brake in time to avert an accident. Even if the conductor could get to the brake he would not be able to apply it quickly enough.

Chimes In Time

THE curfew may have been rung in Dorchester until the early years of this century ("Free Speech," October 9), but here in Corfe Castle the curfew still rings today.

This is a tradition well in keeping with this unspoiled Dorset village.—MARJORIE NEVILLE, Corfe Castle.

From October to March, the curfew bell is rung at 8 p.m. from St. Edward's church, shown in the



background of the photograph. In the seventeenth century a traveller was lost on the moors and the bell guided him to the village. In gratitude he left an annuity to pay for the sounding of the curfew in the years to come. Harry Hopkins, whose "Journey Into Britain" took him to Dorset, writes about "Smugglers' Country" on page 30 this week.

Dialling Dialect

I DO not think that business people prefer the "artificial telephone voice." ("Free Speech," October 16.)

Even the Post Office realizes this. Formerly a telephonist had to be free from accent, but now one can hear all sorts of local intonations in operators' voices.—"Telephonist," Cumberland.

The G.P.O. says that many of their operators have slight accents. An operator's speaking voice is assessed solely on clarity of expression and articulation, but a markedly strong accent is not acceptable.

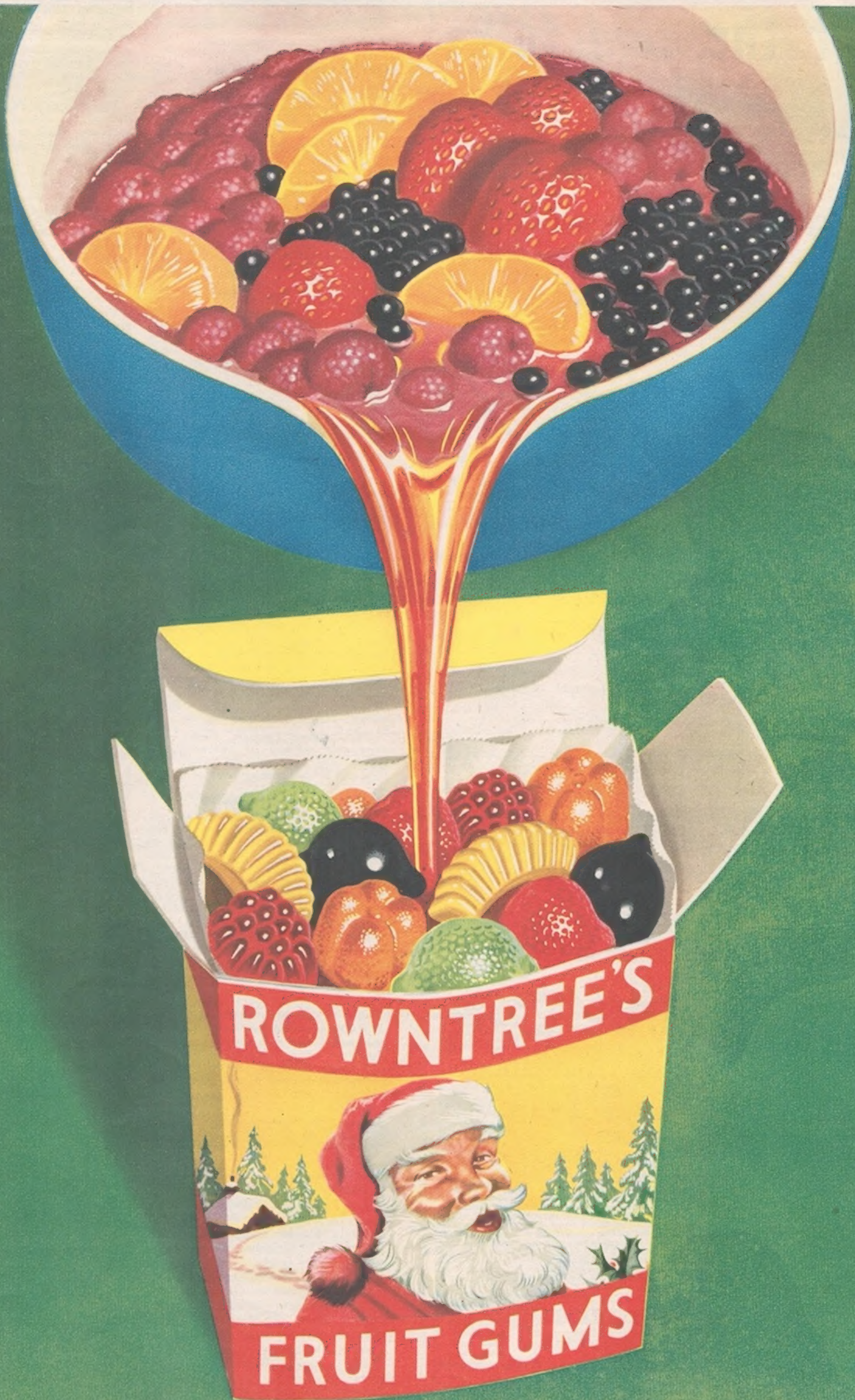
Cash On Delivery

THE Manchester and Salford Trustee Savings Bank has recently offered to add five shillings to any account opened with fifteen shillings in the name of a baby born in the district within the next six months.

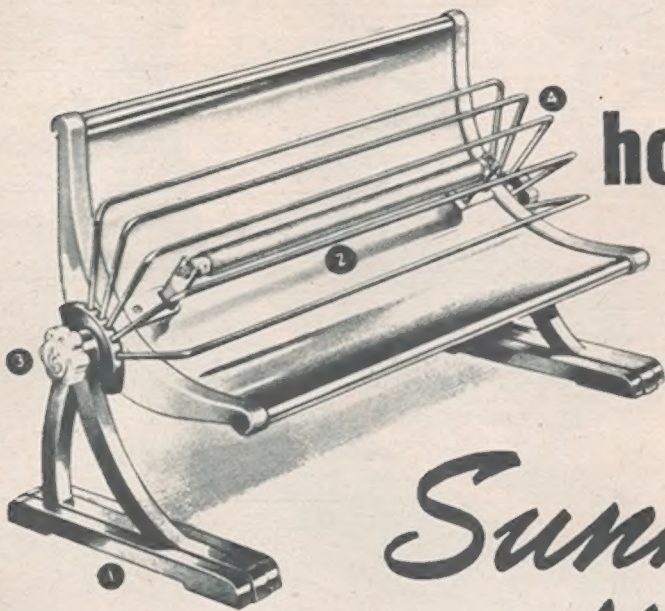
I look forward to the day when all banks offer competing gift schemes to attract new customers.—C. F. BRIEN, East Didsbury, Manchester, 20.

This scheme runs from October 1 to March 31 next year. Presentation of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



For the cold folks at home..



THE Sunny Heat ADJUSTABLE ELECTRIC FIRE

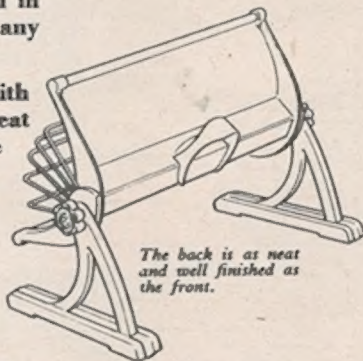
For those chilly moments—getting up; meal times; writing letters; telephoning; going to bed—don't bother to light a fire. Instead, luxuriate in Sunny Heat's portable glow; full heat at the flick of a finger, comfort for as long (and *only* as long) as you need it. No dirt; no mess; no work.

Sunny Heat is an economy—real portable heat for only a penny an hour! A few coppers a week will make your whole outlook 'sunny' this winter.

The new Sunny Heat has all these refinements:

- 1 Solid cast frame attractively finished in two-tone brown to harmonize with any colour scheme.
- 2 Accurate, deep-chromed reflector with focused element gives maximum heat concentration—makes the best use of your penny.
- 3 Tilting device directs the heat beam just where it's wanted.
- 4 Substantial safety guard—of course.

Individually packed in novel carrying container.



The back is at rear and well finished as the front.



For only

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inc. P.T.,

For the cold folks at home

Made by GRAHAM FARISH LIMITED
BROMLEY, KENT



FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

the baby's birth certificate at the bank is all that is required. The bank's 5s. cannot be withdrawn until the child is seven. Interest is paid at the rate of 2½ per cent on the account.

Show Boat

WOLLATON'S children with their old car to play with ("Free Speech," October 20) are not as lucky as the Barking youngsters.

The local council had a paddle steamer specially built to take them



on trips round the lake in the park.

As you can see from the photograph, it's just like the real thing, and, in fact, the engine was taken out of a naval landing craft.—MRS. BROWN, Barking, Essex.

Pay As You Milk

THE spread of the hire purchase system was brought home forcibly to me when I read this advertisement in a recent issue of a well-known country magazine.

"Pay as you milk," it began, and went on to say that cows with a guaranteed milk gallonage could be bought on hire purchase terms and would be delivered direct to any farm in England or Wales on seven days' approval.—ALAN DUNCAN, Heath Street, Hampstead, London.

The National Farmers' Union says that this method of purchasing a dairy herd was common before the war and is now coming back into use.

Good In Parts

I AM a vicar's daughter and—I think—human, gay and young. Yet I have noticed that people find it hard to accept me at my face value.

To them I am always the vicar's daughter; normal conversation dries up when I enter the room; I am asked to buy tickets for dreary concerts and invited to boring meetings.

I wish people would realize that I am not dull and prudish, as they seem to imply, but just an ordinary person like themselves.—MISS A. D., Guildford, Surrey.

Dry Clean

I HAD intended to bath our dog this week, but wet and cold weather made me change my mind.

Fearing that he might catch a chill, I determined to give him a dry cleaning; then I saw your cover

picture (JOHN BULL, October 16), and began to debate whether to bath or not to bath. What is the best way of tackling the bathing problem in winter—or doesn't cold weather make any difference to animals? —N. JAMES ROBINSON, Radcliffe, Lancashire.

The People's Dispensary for Sick Animals says that dogs should be bathed as little as possible in winter. Soap destroys the weather-proofing in their fur. Tubbing should be followed by a brisk rub and a fast walk. For white-coated dogs, dry-cleaning with chalk block is useful—but inclined to be dusty.

Precious Stones

IN Kimberley, during the war, I went to see the "Big Hole," a worked-out diamond mine reputed to be the largest man-made hole in the world.

From the viewing enclosure, the ground dropped abruptly to an unknown depth, and we were told that it would take a stone seven seconds to reach the water at the bottom of the hole.

Looking about for pebbles to test the truth of this, we could find none.

Then a native came up and offered to sell us some—at 6d. each. He had gathered up all the available ammunition and so cornered the market in stones.—A. H. HALEY, Woolton, Liverpool.

Dutch Treat

ON the first night of my walking tour in the Tyrol, I arrived very late at a darkened hotel. Rousing the proprietress, I begged for a bed. She told me I was welcome to the only one available, and led me to a door.

"There's a Dutch widow in there, and if you are cold there are extra blankets in the cupboard," she said, and vanished.

The room was unlighted, and in the bed I could just see a large hump. Too tired to worry, I found the blankets and slept on the hard couch in the corner.

Next morning I found the bed occupied by nothing more than a bolster, which, I learned, is a customary Austrian device for extra warmth in bed and goes by the name of a Dutch widow.—A. BLACK, Belfast.

Book For A Tooth

WHEN the ballcock in our water tank jammed one Saturday afternoon, I rang the plumber and begged him to spare the time to put it right. "I'm just off to a football match," he said. "Turn the water off at the main—I'll try to come in next week."

It was poetic justice that the same plumber should come to me on a Sunday some months later to plead with me, as the nearest dentist, to see his daughter, who had raging toothache. I opened the surgery at

Continued on page 8

THIS WEEK'S COVER

IN the history of fireworks the Gunpowder Plot is a very small damp squib indeed. Centuries before they came to Europe, fireworks were used in Asia for weddings, quarrels and funerals. In England there were fireworks and "Green Men" burned at the start of November—to celebrate winter—long before Guy Fawkes left the Spanish army in Flanders to come home. Down the years the primitive love of playing with fire has incited people to happy squandering—and burned fingers. Richard O. Rose depicts the magic of "the Fifth"—though the unguarded rockets show that the children have not taken the good advice in this week's editorial.



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COULD BE THE
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THIS COUPON
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PERSONAL PASSPORT
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Send it NOW!

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GENERAL CERT. OF EDUCATION

I'm so happy with my **G.E.C.**

So marvellous to have an oven door that opens like that, and gives you a shelf to stand hot, heavy dishes on. Saves so much grease-spilling, finger-burning and lifting. Just a touch of the handle, and it glides down smoothly itself. Easy to see that women have had a big hand in planning this wonderful G.E.C. cooker.

Cooking without Looking Really, that G.E.C. Ovenmaster practically does the baking for you. You just see the dial—it actually lights up!—pop your joint, your pies, pastries and cakes in; and at the right time, out they

come, perfectly done. No more opening the oven door every five minutes to see if all goes well! It's such a big oven too, with a specially compact, quick, even-heating element.

Room at the Top Ample room for five saucepans. You can boil, simmer and grill—all at the same time. It's just a matter of turning the switches. At the bottom of the cooker, there is a handy drawer with a separate switch, for warming dishes.

Modern Beauty—Modern Colours A real piece of streamlined elegance, finished in silk-smooth porcelain enamel, with hand-



some, easy-grip plastic handles, all so easy to clean. You can choose two shades of cream, cream and green or all white. Take the guess-work out of

cooking and save electricity! See this super G.E.C. cooker at your local dealer's or electricity service centre.

DC114

£37.12.6

Tax Free

WITH SOLID PLATES

● Write for illustrated, descriptive leaflet DC1118 to Magnet House, Kingsway, London W.C.2

The General Electric Co. Ltd.

It opened Mai's eyes!

WHAT IS IT LIKE to see yourself as a sculptor does?

"Definitely surprising," says lovely Mai Zetterling. "It's the first time I've looked at myself in 'three dimensions,' and I've discovered some new angles I never knew about before!"

But Mai's flawless complexion bears witness to the fact that she has little new to learn about keeping her skin lovely. She took a good look at toilet soaps a long time ago, and wisely picked the *whitest of all*—Lux Toilet Soap.

You see, the whiteness of Lux Toilet Soap is an outward sign of its inward purity. It's an assurance that Lux Toilet Soap is gentle and mild, safe enough to merit the care of the most delicate skin.

Look for yourself, as Mai Zetterling did—and you'll find that Lux Toilet Soap is the very *whitest* in the world. On sight alone, you sense its wonderful purity. Nine out of 10 film stars use Lux Toilet Soap. They, too, have their eyes wide open where their complexion's concerned.



The bewitching fragrance of pure, white Lux Toilet Soap lingers lovingly with you, enhances your allure. Try Lux Toilet Soap today. It comes in two sizes—each a promise of new loveliness for your delicate skin.

MAI ZETTERLING meets herself in a new dimension—the art of sculpture. You'll meet her, currently, in the Paramount film, "Knock on Wood." Watch the colour close-ups of her exquisite Lux Toilet Soap complexion!

9 out of 10 film stars use pure, white Lux Toilet Soap

Could you do with some of that Everest energy?



Then. To conquer the world's highest mountain, the 1953 Mount Everest Expedition needed every ounce of energy they could get. So they took Grape-Nuts with them. Concentrated, easy to carry and delicious to eat, Grape-Nuts gave them the "Everest energy" they needed.

Every day. You, too, need the quick lasting "Everest energy" that Grape-Nuts will give you. And it is quick energy, because malty-sweet Grape-Nuts contain dextrose, a substance your body turns into energy fast.



With so many calls on us these days, most people could do with some of the "Everest energy" that breakfast with Grape-Nuts can give.

Made from wheat and malted barley, Grape-Nuts are concentrated goodness. To the Everest climbers, that meant less to carry. To you it means a handy packet that holds 12 ounces — as much as the biggest you can buy! And a little Grape-Nuts with milk and sugar make a big, energy-giving helping.

Get delicious Grape-Nuts to-day. Serve them for breakfast tomorrow and put your family, like the Mount Everest climbers, on top of the world!



Serve delicious malty-sweet
Grape-Nuts

ANOTHER FINE PRODUCT OF ALFRED BIRD AND SONS LTD. DEVONSHIRE WORKS, BIRMINGHAM 12

FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

once and filled the little girl's tooth. I have now received a gift from the grateful father. It is a book entitled: "Teach Yourself Plumbing."—T. K., Aylesbury, Bucks.

Painless Saving

WHEN we were first married, my husband and I were able to make a comfortable home and to live reasonably well, but a car was beyond our means.

Then my husband had a bright idea. We have now saved enough to buy a sound second-hand car, and next year we'll have a fridge.

This is how we did it. My husband used to draw money from the bank every Thursday so that I could shop on a Friday.

Now he goes to the bank on a different day each week—if it's Thursday one week, it's Friday the next, and so on. I shop the day after he gives me the housekeeping, and make the money last for eight days instead of seven.

It's not easy when, once every five weeks, I have to budget for ten days—after a Friday, the next payday is on Monday week—but I have got used to it.

We save £6—a week's housekeeping—every six weeks, and our method makes it practically painless.—Mrs. M.K., Penzance, Cornwall.

Bless The Bride

IN the Swiss town of Winterthur earlier this year, I was invited to a local wedding.

After the ceremony, when we left



the church, I was surprised to see a large crowd of very excited children waiting outside.

I soon learned the reason: the bride's father (in a bowler hat in my photograph) opened a paper bag that he took from his pocket and began distributing sweets to all the children.—DAVID REES, Taplow, Bucks.

It's a Swiss custom to distribute sweets to children after a wedding. The sweets are wrapped in brightly coloured paper with "Christmas cracker" verses printed on it. Often sweets are given out by everyone who took part in the wedding.

Shock For Mr. Therm

BEFORE we moved into another house, the Gas Board installed a tap near the drawing-room fireplace, so that I could use a gas poker.

As I was cleaning the empty house, an inspector arrived from the Electricity Board. He tested the meter and looked at the power points.

In the drawing-room he pointed to the new gas tap. "That had better come out," he said. "It's too near the electricity point and that's dangerous."—Mrs. J. F., London.

An official of the London Electricity Board explains that anyone who brings an unearthed electrical appliance into contact with a gas pipe, runs the risk of electric shock. The Board's inspector has no power to order the removal of a gas fitting; he can only give advice for the householder's safety.

Doctors' Dilemma

WHY is it that, although it is one of the leading professions, there is no retiring age for doctors?

One would think that in view of

the skill and energy required to follow this calling, it would be necessary to fix a retiring age when doctors could be pensioned off.—G. C. G., Saxmundham, Suffolk.

The National Health Service has no fixed retiring age for general practitioners. They qualify for a pension at the age of sixty if they have been in the N.H.S. for ten years. A general practitioner who retires in 1958 after qualifying for a pension will, if his

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

SNAKE MAN

As Chief Reptile Keeper at London Zoo he's fought with pythons—and taken cobras abroad in a suitcase

earnings have averaged £1,000 a year for example, receive £450 in cash and a pension of £150 a year.

Eastern Approach

I LIT a cigarette for a man to whom I'd just been introduced. "I see you've been out East," he said.

We had never met before and I am not particularly sunburned, so I asked him how he knew, for I was stationed in India during the war.

"You struck the match away from you," he said. "Only people who have been used to Oriental matches, with heads that tend to fly off, do that."

"It's a trick I always watch out for—I find that it's very handy as an opening gambit in a conversation with a stranger."—MARK RICHARDS, Coventry.

New Look

WHEN my son went to the barber, he usually returned having had only the lightest trim. To persuade him to get his hair cut shorter, I have adopted the following arrangement.

If he has a very short cut, I pay the whole cost. If he gets what I call half a cut, I pay half the price, and he pays the rest. His hair is now very much shorter—and tidier.—MRS. HILDA DEARDEN, Laurel Bank, Halifax, Yorkshire.

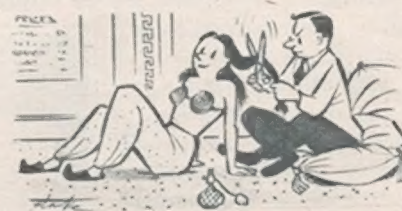
... The letter about the haircut in the village smithy ("Free Speech," October 16) reminds me of my own experience during the war.

I was on holiday in a small Cotswold village. My hair needed trimming badly, but the nearest hair-dressing salon was miles away.

I went to the village barber and delivered an impassioned plea, saying that I knew he didn't usually do ladies' hairdressing, but I didn't want to go to the distant town.

He looked at me stonily, then delivered his verdict: "Only Turkish!"

A young labourer who had been



listening, explained. "He's deaf," he said. "He thought you were after cigarettes like the rest of them."—MRS. J. BEARD, Farnol Road, Yardley, Birmingham.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service

New! Different!! A meal in itself!!!



Thick with real peas
you can see!

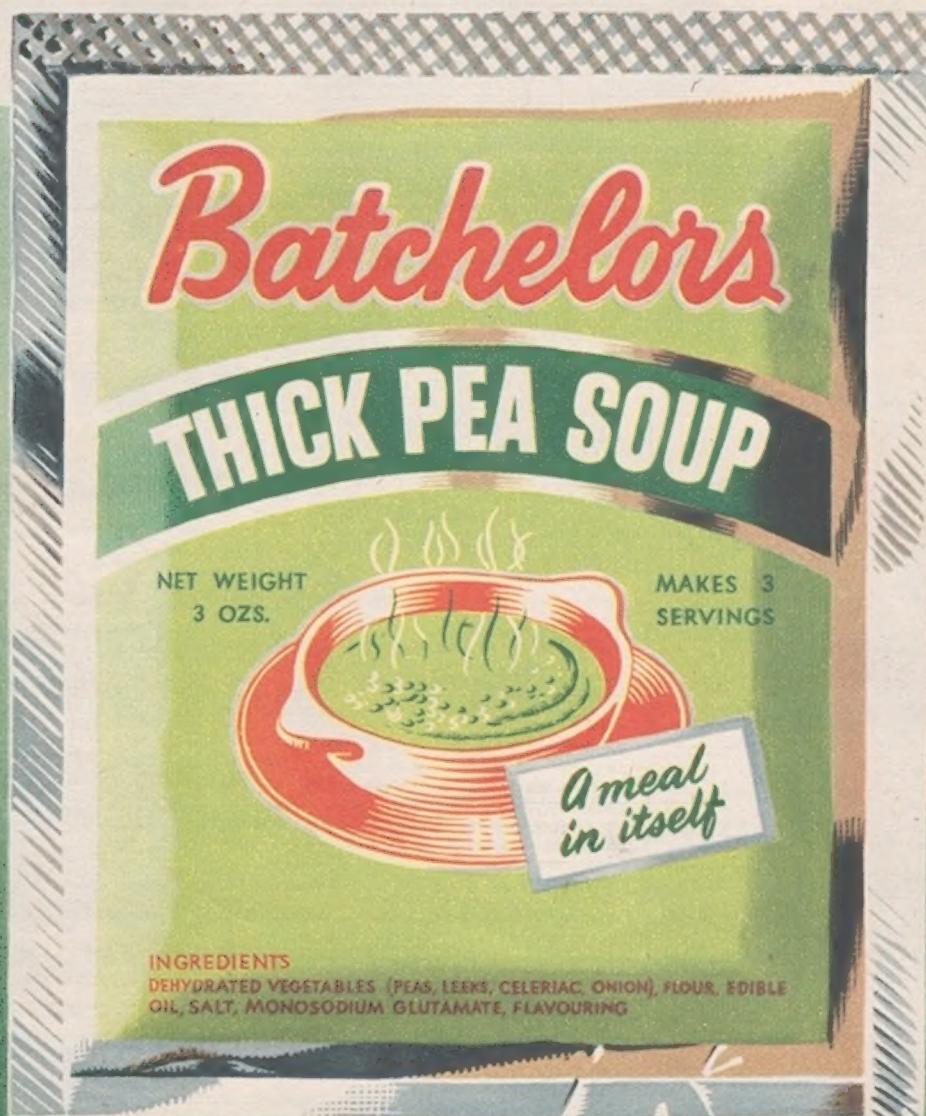


Enriched with other
tasty vegetables!



It's a meal in itself
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Batchelors **THICK PEA SOUP**



You'll like the Handy Foil Pack!

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THIS NEW SOUP-MIX from Batchelors captures all the good, old-fashioned richness of *real* pea soup. Yes—rich, thick, nourishing pea soup! It's full of peas and more peas—peas you can actually see! — plus leeks and other tasty vegetables. More than just a soup, it's a meal in itself for man-size appetites. Try this wonderfully different soup tonight! Serves three, costs only 1/-.

Batchelors Soup Mixes

FOR REAL FLAVOUR - ALL AT 1/- →



SHOOT FIRST!

*Beginning the inside story
of adventure in the world's
toughest trouble-spots by
newsreel cameraman
RONNIE NOBLE*

THE GOLF COURSE WAS QUIET, almost deserted. It always is at mid-week, which is the only time I can squeeze in a game. Whenever I get a day off, the rest of the world is working. So, as usual, I was playing a "onesome." My drive went right down the middle of the fairway—nearly a hundred yards. I usually sliced on the second and lost the ball in the woods, but this time it was plumb centre. And there was not a soul to witness it!

I put the driver back in the bag and walked on to take the second shot. Half-way from the tee to the ball, I heard an unfamiliar sound—to a golf course, that is. I looked around and saw a motor-cycle bumping towards me, a heavily goggled figure crouching over it. "Not quite the place for a motor-cycle," I thought, as it approached me along the track.

It stopped and the rider asked: "Ronnie Noble?"

I nodded, and he then handed me a telegram. I opened it

and read the message. It was very brief: KOREA TODAY THREE O'CLOCK PAN AMERICAN.

I had only one worry as I moved into my seat in the plane; could I get to Korea before they signed the armistice? The signing ceremony, which I was to film for the B.B.C. Television Newsreel, was expected to take place within a few days. I reckoned that I would need fifty-six hours to reach Tokyo, and another twelve hours in Japan to get injections and arrange for a plane to Korea.

The Constellation rumbled down the runway, and we took off, climbing steeply. I looked below and saw my house, which lies quite near London Airport. A few minutes later we were over the golf course. Then, and only then, did I remember my ball. . . I hadn't picked it up.

The landing in Korea was different from that take-off in London. No sleek young stewardess to fix my seat belt, but a



Chinese troops wave a welcome across no-man's-land as dawn breaks on the first day of peace in Korea. A few moments after filming this scene Ronnie Noble damaged his camera—and missed a scoop as Australian soldiers, acting against orders, went forward to greet and talk to men they had fought

gum-chewing American, who woke me with a clout across the shoulder. "Get ya belt on, Bud, we're gonna try to get in!"

I wondered why it was necessary to *try* to get in, but before I could consider all the grim possibilities, we bumped along the runway and taxied to a feeble yellow light at the end of the strip. There a cockney driver waited with a jeep. It was nice to hear his London voice in the night—so confident, so sure. He loaded my newsreel camera equipment on the jeep, and in a few minutes we were on our way to Seoul.

It was a dark night with no moon and the blackout was still in operation, but I smelt the honey-buckets and dried fish . . . this was Korea! There was no mistaking the smell. I knew it too well, for this was not the first time that the B.B.C. had sent me to Korea to cover the war. That smell accompanied us all the way to Seoul. There I found Stephen Barber of the *News Chronicle* asleep in the press billets. I awoke him with a shake. I'd forgotten it was 3 a.m.

"Steve, when are they signing?"

"Don't be a ruddy fool! They won't be signing for weeks."

He sat up and rubbed his eyes. "But there's one hell of a battle going on at Finger Ridge. The Chinese hit the South Koreans last night, and it's a real scrap. I'm going up at dawn to have a look at it. Coming?"

I had left London three days before to cover an armistice, and there I was, only two hours after arriving in Korea, without any real sleep since London, going to "look at a battle." Would I ever learn, I wondered?

Drive To The Front

It was a long drive in the open jeep from Seoul to the East Central Front. The Korean hilltops were shrouded by heavy rain-clouds, grey misty masses which rolled slowly and heavily across the countryside, blotting out all colour, neutralizing a landscape which in spring or autumn is one of the most beautiful in the world. The rain was incessant, strong and forceful. It pounded at our faces as though each globule was laden with grit.

"There won't be any battle today," said Russell Spurr of the *Daily Express*. I did not answer, but sat counting the drips as they ran off my nose.

Soon I heard the first crack—a mortar. Then artillery fire. It was strange how the sound of that gun-fire brought me back into the atmosphere of war. In a split second my home life

was forgotten. I was in another world, not a pleasant one, but one that I knew, one where the issues were clear: get my pictures, send them back, keep alive.

The shooting was louder and more frequent as we approached Finger Ridge. The jeep turned off the road and followed a muddy track to the foot of the ridge and took the gradient of one-in-three at a rush. Halfway up, the rear wheels began to twist and spin, and we swerved and slewed around until we were only a few feet from the sheer drop into the valley. There was only one thing for it—to get out and walk. My camera and spare film magazines weighed over fifty pounds; the hill was one in three; there were nine inches of soft, wet mud underfoot, and I was out of condition.

Dived Into The Mud

I quickly forgot my self pity when the first Communist mortar-shell landed fifty yards away. We ducked. The second one was thirty yards off, just to one side of the track. Down we went, face forward, mouth full of mud; scared stiff. We

got up, and as we made the top of the ridge the next salvo straddled the peak.

The scene there made good newsreel pictures, but not as dramatic as it should have been, for the South Korean troops just ignored the shells. They walked around, going about their business as though out for a Sunday stroll. Dressed in American uniforms they looked like a bunch of comedians from the silent film days—until they were in battle. Then they proved to be among the toughest soldiers in the world.

A continuous stream of seriously wounded men crawled along the muddy trenches. The South Korean losses must have been tremendous. In spite of their resistance they had to give ground and pull back from the forward posts. I sat in a trench, filming them with the camera poked over the top facing no-man's-land. I couldn't actually see the Chinese, but managed to film the bursts as our mortar-fire fell among the Communist positions a hundred yards away.

All morning, the wounded kept coming through, and even they smiled and waved to the camera. Several bodies lay on the slope, the



Cameramen crowd in as General Clark countersigns the Korean truce documents at Musan. Noble (standing at right) had already filmed the actual signing at Panmunjom, and had dispatched his film

rain washing their blood into the ground. The Korean troops stood beside them, forming an assault patrol. They smiled into the camera, completely serene.

One of them said after I'd made a shot of him, "We are proud that you are here to see us die for our country." He meant it. And they *were* dying. In unbelievable numbers. On Finger Ridge alone they lost ten thousand casualties in one year. . . .

The war raged all day; there was no let-up. In spite of the impending armistice, men were still killing and being killed in Korea, along a hundred and fifty mile front. That was the theme of the story I sent back.

The elusive Korean Armistice seemed as far away as ever, and very few people in Korea really believed it would ever be signed, particularly the troops in the front line. "I'll believe it when I see it," was the favourite expression.

Champagne In Tin Mugs

For selfish reasons, I lived for the armistice. I had covered this war on my previous assignment almost from the beginning, and I wanted to see the end. It had become almost a fetish with me, and when the B.B.C. considered recalling me because the possibility of a successful armistice had diminished since I left London, I stalled as hard as I could. I wanted to film that ceremony at Panmunjom, to see our prisoners of war come back. I'd been with the Glosters only a few hours before they were attacked and made that gallant stand on Gloster Hill. Many of them were personal friends, and I wanted to film them coming back to freedom. I would rather have gone absent without leave than have left Korea at that moment.

Luckily, I wasn't forced to make that decision, for out of the blue an announcement appeared on the correspondents' notice-board: "Armistice Negotiators will sign an Armistice Agreement at Panmunjom tomorrow (Monday) at 10.00 hours. Space will be limited. Correspondents wishing to attend the ceremony please sign below."

There were a hundred and one signatures on the list—a hundred from the United Nations correspondents and one Yugoslav, and each and every one of them began to celebrate the good news. The British contingent opened a bottle of champagne — 22s. 6d. at the Naafi — and drinking from chipped enamel mugs toasted the armistice, then prepared to cover the last day of the war, each one hoping for a scoop.

Set Out On Last Patrol

I spent the evening with The King's Regiment. As the daylight began to fail, they prepared for their nightly—and last—patrol. I filmed them having their cup of "char," slightly afraid that they might be superstitious about being filmed before a patrol, particularly at a time like that. There was no need for worry. Nothing in the world could get those young soldiers down. Nearly all National Servicemen between eighteen and twenty years old, they were a match for any situation. They sat in a group, scraping up handfuls of mud and rubbing it on their faces and arms. "Black Out," they called it.

The corporal picked up a dollop of thick mud and slapped it on his pal's face. "Must have your ruddy TV make-up on!" he said. They all laughed and stood up to check their weapons. Then the young officer briefed them. He was a first lieutenant, who looked quite ridiculous with his young face blackened, and bright blue eyes shining through the grime.

As darkness fell they moved off, and as he passed the camera one of them said: "I'll believe that ruddy armistice when I see it!"

"I won't believe it—not even then!" replied his pal, and they disappeared over the horizon into no-man's-land.

As I watched them go, I wondered if all these gallant young men would return, if any of them would be killed when the armistice was only



Author Ronnie Noble in Korea. Thirty-eight years old, he has been filming headline news for fifteen years, the last five as a cameraman-reporter for the B.B.C. Television Newsreel

twelve hours away. There was no time to dwell on the thought. There was a long drive in front of me—three hours of jeeping over corrugated roads. The courier plane stood by at Seoul air-strip, awaiting the day's news pictures. My camera had to be serviced for tomorrow's signing, and I had to be up at four o'clock.

The plane was still waiting when I drove into the passenger terminal, and the film left for Tokyo at midnight. I wrote my daily cable to the B.B.C. in London, which read: SHIPPED SIX MINUTE STORY ON LAST PATROL OF KOREAN WAR. I lay on the bed hoping it was true. As a newsman I should have known better than to stick my neck out with a positive statement like that.

That night I dreamed that the Chinese had attacked and overrun our positions. I was glad

when four o'clock came round and it was time to load the cameras on the jeep once again and head for the neutral zone, between the Communists in the north and the United Nations in the south.

Panmunjom, once a hamlet of three mud huts, wore the air of a Spanish village at fiesta time. The huge Peace Pagoda dominated the scene, an immense wooden structure which the Communist troops had built in three days. An impossible feat, we thought, when they started. But as we watched them at work, we were given a perfect demonstration of Chinese methods—methods which had helped to make them such a tough opponent in the Korean conflict. Two hundred Chinese troops were driven up in transports. Before the wheels came to a halt, they

jumped off clutching picks and shovels and ran to their pre-arranged task. Not one man walked—they ran everywhere. Their spades churned up the barren ground, wooden slats were slung upright, there was the racket of metal hitting wood, and the Pagoda began to grow before our eyes.

It went up as fast as Jack's beanstalk. The ant-like Chinese crawled over, under and through it, while a captured American bulldozer ploughed out a roadway. If you have enough men—and they are expendable—you decide on a target, keep pouring in men until the job is done. That's how they fought the war, and they built the Peace Pagoda in the same manner.

The Chinese were tough to fight and just as tough to film. There was no way of knowing how they would react when they saw the camera pointing at them. At times, they would spring to attention and stare straight ahead; at others, they would scowl and turn away, hiding their faces with short, stubby hands.

When they were building the Peace Pagoda they were aggressive. I approached them with the camera and began to make shots of them digging, hoping to illustrate their curious method of using a spade. Each spade had a team of three. One man thrust the spade into the earth and the other two hauled on a rope which pulled the spade through the ground and, by the suddenness of the movement, shot the contents forward.

I approached to within three yards of one of these teams, held the camera to my eye and started filming. Through the viewfinder I saw them scowl, the "digger" muttered a few words and the very next moment a shovelful of earth and stones hit the camera. The next load caught me in the stomach before I could retreat.

Fifteen Minutes To Peace

On armistice day, the Pagoda was ready and the distinguished guests and reporters of both sides took up their places inside. It was a quarter to ten. Fifteen minutes to go and the war would be over. People spoke in hushed voices. Sitting at the right of the two tables set aside for the signing were the Communist group of V.I.P.s. They sat perfectly still, their uniforms unusually uniform, and even their faces looked as though they'd been issued by the Communist Quartermaster—and just for the day. As ten o'clock approached, the churchlike atmosphere increased in solemnity. Even the bull-necked military policemen lost their aggressive look and became silent, walking tiptoe in army boots.

I stood on a rostrum with cameras ready, and

at two minutes to ten the special photographic lamps were switched on. Cameramen made a last-minute check on their apparatus; radio reporters tapped their microphones and told America to stand by for the big moment. There was a rustle of expectancy. Then the doors opened, the cameras whirled, and in came the signatories. From the left General Harrison of the United Nations. From the right General Nam Il of North Korea.

They moved in unison, and so precise were their movements that I wondered if they'd been practising together in secret. Each took a chair at his own table, each on his side of the Peace Pagoda. There was no fraternizing here. The two generals took up their pens, paused for a moment, then began to sign the momentous documents. There wasn't a sound.

A Running Commentary

"Get your head down!" a voice bawled at my side. It was an American cameraman, addressing a colleague in front. I don't know if Harrison and Nam Il heard it. If they didn't, they were the only ones among the two hundred guests who didn't. Inscrutably, they went on signing.

"How the hell can I get my head down with this jerk in front blocking me?" replied the other chap reasonably.

The signing continued, and the audience to a man, as though by some prearranged plan, completely ignored the discussion that went on between the two cameramen. Their vocabulary was limited, but what they lacked in words they made up for in volume.

General Nam Il's aide took the sixteen signed copies of the armistice agreement to the desk between the two tables, laid them quietly down. General Harrison's aide did likewise with his copies, then took those bearing Nam Il's signature back to his master for endorsement. The two generals went on signing, wooden-faced to the last.

"Hell! I still can't see a thing. I'll get fired for this." The American cameraman was still trying. But his pleas fell on deaf ears. Neither Harrison or Nam Il concerned themselves with his problem, and when all thirty-two copies were signed, they stood up, and each walked to his own door.

Immediately there was pandemonium. Cameramen raced to the door clasp film; radio men screamed down their microphones, afraid that New York would not hear; military policemen, back to the job they understood, shouted and pushed everybody around.

As I ran from the Pagoda with my film, on



Feeling very raw but daring in tin hat and in 1939 to film the war. He was twenty-three

the way to the helicopter which was to rush it on the first leg to Tokyo, I heard a voice behind me screaming: "If you'd only put your head down. . . ."

Somehow, the ceremony was not quite as I'd imagined it would be.

It was cold on the Hook that night, and the Australian troops were shivering as they brewed up the inevitable "char." The damp cold mist seeped right into the trenches and obscured everything in the slight glimmer of dawn. The Hook, scene of many bitter battles, was getting ready for a new day. But it was not just another new day. It was special, extra special. When dawn broke it would be the first day of the armistice. It would be possible to put your head over the trench in broad daylight and not get it shot off. It would be possible to climb, yes, actually climb over that parapet, in clear view of the Chinese, and live to tell the tale.

The Aussies sat waiting for dawn, still wearing their flakjackets (armoured waistcoats that saved many lives in Korea). I sat with the camera ready to get the shot of the first man going over the skyline. Suddenly, one of them spoke. "You know, I'm goin' over to look at that joker!"

He jerked his thumb towards the Chinese lines. "I've never seen the Chink in daylight. I know what he looks like at night, though." He said this with some pride in his voice. The sort of pride that comes in being a good soldier, in knowing that you are as good as the enemy, and perhaps better.

Eerie Voice In The Mist

The idea of "going over to see that joker" quickly caught on, and all along the trench I saw the Australians getting ready to climb over the parapet.

Just then an eerie voice came through the mist. The Chinese were shouting to us. I couldn't make out what they said, but one Aussie swore he could get the gist of it. "They are asking us to go over!" he cried.

We all listened, and the voice repeated again and again a jumble of words that were not at all clear. But that was enough for the Aussies, those inquisitive fellows. They did not want to fraternize, they did not particularly want to see the Chinese, they simply wanted to have a look



Noble had trouble with red tape when he filmed King George VI touring east coast defences after Dunkirk. Unable to get his pictures, he demanded to speak to the King—and succeeded



officer's breeches, Ronnie Noble went to France and the youngest war correspondent with the B.E.F.



London's Regent Street is deserted—and with good reason. In the road a secret device attempts to neutralize an unexploded bomb. It was a scoop film for Noble—until the police arrested him

at whoever was over there. If they'd been fighting squirrels they would have wanted to go just as much. My hunch was right. I'd gone to the Australian Battalion for that very reason. I felt that if any Commonwealth troops met the Chinese it would be these daring Aussies, but now the moment had come I wasn't too happy about it. I did not relish the idea of walking out towards yesterday's enemy until I was certain that he fully understood that yesterday was yesterday, and today was cease-fire.

The Grimness Of War

I took a few shots of the Aussies taking off their flakjackets, leaving their weapons behind, then climbed over the parapet with them, carrying the camera and some spare film. Slowly we picked our way along the patrol path. We walked through a battle ground shrouded with moving mist, which suddenly swirled to one side and exposed the grimness of war—an amputated hand still clutching a stick-grenade. Every yard brought a reminder that only two days ago the battle raged here.

Suddenly the mist cleared, and there stood the Chinese, five of them. They were on the summit of their hill, beneath a Communist flag.

"Pig's eye, there's the Chink!" cried the leader of the file and started to trot towards them, waving his hands in the air. I turned to follow—and tripped on a barbed wire loop. Down I went, flat on my face, the camera slipped out of my hand and tumbled down the hill, gathering momentum every time it hit the ground.

I got up. There, thirty yards away, was the best newsreel scoop I've ever seen. The Aussies were shaking hands with the Chinese, exchanging cigarettes, laughing and trying to talk together. It was one of the moments when a cameraman doesn't consider ethics: shoot first and questions afterwards—that's the only policy at such times. It was a fact that the Aussies were meeting the Chinese, and it was my job to show it.

But alas, my camera was two hundred feet down the hillside, on the edge of a minefield. I retrieved it safely, but it was jammed and caked with mud. It looked dead for ever. It'll never work again, I thought, as I turned my back on this unique newsreel story and trudged disconsolately back to our own lines.

As I came into the Aussies' positions, I was

met by the company commander, a sour-faced Australian major. "Get out of my positions!" he ordered. "If you're not gone inside ten minutes I'll shoot you!"

I was too depressed to argue. Leaving the Hook and an absolute winner of a story, I drove towards the First American Marines' positions, hoping to have better luck there. But first I had to do two hours camera servicing, using the jeep-bonnet as a bench, and to my great delight managed to fix the camera mechanically, although all the viewfinders were broken.

Pessimistically, I climbed up towards the Marines. The hill was steep; it was a hundred in the shade; my camera was heavy and my morale was non-existent. Gathering all my strength, I dashed up the last twenty yards of the rocky hill and stumbled over the summit. I stopped with a jerk. A Chinese stood looking right at me. He was five feet away. We looked at each other for a while. I was looking to see if he had a gun, he at I don't know what.

After the first moment of panic, I saw a number of American Marines sitting around in small groups, watching the Chinese remove their dead from inside the United Nations' lines. That was an indication as to how far they had penetrated before being killed. Some of the corpses were actually in the Marines' forward trenches, still grasping grenades.

Hatred In Their Eyes

I made shots of the Chinese, taking my camera within a few feet of their home-made stretchers, and followed them back towards their own lines, but as we approached their side of the line they waved me back to where the Americans sat. They were not shaking hands with the Communists, nor were they giving cigarettes away. Silently, they watched the Chinese. There was hatred in their eyes. And confusion, too. How was it that the stroke of a pen could change all this? On the night before last, the Marines had lost a lot of men during a fierce Chinese attack. Now the very enemy who killed them were walking around the Marine lines, calmly collecting their dead.

Later that evening, back in Seoul, I wrote the day's story and began to pack the film. I felt smug. I'd got a good story and I knew it.

Stephen Barber of the *News Chronicle* came in

and sat on my bed. "I've picked up a good piece from the Australians," he said. "An Aussie company commander on the Hook invited the opposing Chinese company commander over for a cup of tea, and had a military discussion on the last two battles. They talked together for over half an hour."

It was the same Australian company commander who ran me off his positions. Then I understood. He wanted to meet the Chinese face to face, but he didn't want a television camera making a permanent record of the meeting, for there was a strict non-fraternization order given out to the Commonwealth Division immediately the armistice was signed.

Any Place Any Time

Two weeks later I sat in a comfortable seat in the Constellation aeroplane waiting to take off for London. I looked out of the window and absent-mindedly watched the Japanese ground crews trundling baggage and fuel around Haneda Airport. But my mind was on the Korean assignment—it was over at last. I'd filmed the armistice, the cease-fire, our prisoners of war coming back from Communist hands. It was finished and I was going home.

A fat, American-looking gentleman puffed his way along the aircraft and stopped at my seat. He threw a huge yellow briefcase into the overhead rack, wiped his forehead, and blew cigar smoke in my face. He settled himself down beside me.

"Kramer," he said, "Sam Kramer."

"Noble," I replied. "Ronnie Noble."

We shook hands.

"I'm in flesh!" said Kramer.

"Oh!" was all I could think of.

"Yessir. I sell flesh. Variety acts—send 'em any place any time. What's your racket?" he demanded.

"Flesh!" I replied.

He lifted his eyebrows.

"My flesh. And my boss sends it any place at any time!"

Between Tokyo and Hongkong he told me his life story, and by shouting him down I told him mine. I told him how in 1939, in a small office in London, I started this job as newsreel

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Parties mean business for Robert Hilton

by JOHN HARMAN

He organizes anything, from launching a liner to running a feast in a silk-lined marquee. And to guarantee success he will build a handstand over a rosebed—or rescue guests from trees



THE CLIMAX in the unveiling of a £140,000 war memorial at Runnymede in Surrey last year was reached when the Queen, who was performing the ceremony, finished her speech and pressed a button. The 20,000 people present, and millions more who were seeing the ceremony on television, watched intently as a pair of beige curtains, each 30 ft. wide and 18 ft. high, parted slowly to reveal a three-arched gateway.

In the dramatic pause while this happened, a Canadian radio commentator breathed a sigh of relief. Turning to one of the onlookers, a thick-set man named Robert Hilton, he confessed that he had dreaded that the curtains might not open at the crucial moment.

Hilton replied that, as the contractor in charge of the unveiling, he had staked his reputation on it.

"They were pulled by an electric motor working off the mains," he says. "If the mains had failed, a mobile generator would have started up automatically. If the generator had failed, batteries would have been used. And if they had failed, men standing by with ropes would have opened the curtains by hand."

Trapped Under Stage

Hilton, a breezy, elegant, forty-three year old Londoner, is aware that a serious hitch could cost him the job of organizing big functions. As the head of John Edgington and Co., a firm which specializes in this type of work, he has been the stage manager at public ceremonies such as launchings, the laying of foundation stones and the opening of bridges, tunnels, universities, hospitals and satellite towns.

One of his most hard-pressed assignments was the erection of a huge canvas sanctuary in the middle of Wembley Stadium for a congress attended by 80,000 Catholics. Throughout a night of driving rain—work could not begin until a greyhound meeting had finished in the evening—his men struggled to line it with delicate red, white and gold cloth in readiness for a celebration of high mass early the next morning.

On another occasion, a last-minute delay resulted in a carpenter suffering acute discomfort. The event was a stone-laying ceremony. Just before it began, the authorities in charge decided to test the stability of the platform by calling in Guardsmen to double up and down on it. The carpenter crawled under the platform with some wedges to stop any movement—and

Mock seagulls add novelty to a £10,000 party Hilton ran at a London theatre. For an outdoor spree he once supplied some paddle boats



In his firm's warehouse, Hilton (right) chooses decorations for a garden party. Once, at a wedding reception, he mounted the cake on a sundial



A pennant flies outside Hilton's home as he prepares for a drive in his horse carriage. At work he inspects everything—by Rolls-Royce

was trapped there when the ceremony started. He lay directly beneath the feet of the Royal party, scarcely daring to breathe.

Hilton quickly learned to respect the likes and dislikes of Royalty. When he was organizing a ceremony at which King George V was to sign a visitors' book, the King's secretary called at Hilton's office in the Old Kent Road, London, and mentioned that the King wrote with "an ordinary penny nib."

"I went to a stationer's," says Hilton, "and could not resist telling the assistant that the nib which I wanted would be used by the King. He refused to believe that a king would write with anything less than a gold nib." Hilton bought a gold nib, a long pen-holder, an inkwell and a rocker blotter embellished with solid silver.

All seemed to go well at the ceremony, but the following day the secretary returned to Hilton's office in a state of agitation. He passed on a message from the King that when a penny nib was asked for, absolutely nothing else would do. As a parting shot, the secretary added: "Please also remember that the Royal signature is never, never blotted."

Hilton has decorated whole streets and many large buildings for festive occasions. For the coronation of George VI, operations were complicated by a thick mist which descended on London early that day. "One of our contracts was for decorating a museum in Kensington," recalls Kenneth Flin, a co-director. "Time was short, and we worked feverishly to finish the job. When yards of banners and bunting were up, we removed the ladders and saw, in the dawn light, that we had festooned the wrong museum."

Hitch At Royal Ceremony

Hilton inspects every job at its completion. He travels on business trips in a chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce, but at home, in Hayes, Kent, where he lives with his wife, his favourite means of transport is a carriage and pair. He drives in the style of a country gentleman, with a footman seated behind him, and a dalmatian trotting between the rear wheels.

After joining his firm at the age of nineteen, he was given, as his first solo assignment, the unveiling of a statue by the Duke of Windsor—then Prince of Wales. "From my point of view, the statue was a brute," Hilton says. "It was of a French general riding a horse. There was a cocked

hat, spurs and pointed ears—in fact, many spikes on which the flags could get caught."

At the ceremony, his fears were realized. The flags became tangled and he had to urge the Prince to more vigorous efforts with the rope and tassel. An embarrassing situation was saved only by a foreman, pulling down the flags with an emergency release from behind the scenes.

Made Flags For Nelson

This year, when unveiling statues of Alcock and Brown, the transatlantic fliers, at London Airport, Hilton guarded against similar mishaps by relying on a device known as the "garter." This was invented shortly after the first World War, following a commission from the Office of Works for unveiling the Cenotaph in Whitehall.

It had been requested that the ceremony should involve a new and spectacular technique. "My father despaired of finding one. While riding on a bus, however, he noticed that the silk stocking of a woman passer-by had fallen down. The thought that perhaps her garter had snapped gave him the idea of stretching flags round the top of the monument on an elastic rope and breaking it, at the appropriate moment, by pulling out a pin joining the two ends."

Many of the flags which Hilton uses are made by his own staff of seamstresses. One of the first orders received by his firm, which was established in 1805, was for a set of naval flags—which Nelson later flew at Trafalgar in his famous "England expects . . ." signal. On October 21, as on previous anniversaries of the battle, Hilton hoisted the same signal on a flag-staff outside his office.

The smallest flag he has supplied was the Union Jack which flew on the bonnet of Field Marshal Montgomery's car during the invasion of Europe. The largest was a Union Jack as long as a cricket pitch, commissioned by a store.

During the social "season," from May to August, Hilton is busy organizing outdoor parties and receptions. For a function in a garden, the siting of the tent or marquee is governed by the host's reluctance to risk damage to his flowers. Once, Hilton had to take great care when building a bandstand, six feet high, over a client's favourite rosebed. At a wedding reception, a marquee enclosed a sundial which the owner did not want moved. Hilton unscrewed

its top and mounted the wedding cake on the pedestal.

He maintains that when permanent features of a garden intrude into a scheme, it is better to use them rather than make an attempt at concealment. Recently, he advised a newcomer to the firm: "If a tree grows through the floor, festoon it with garlands, hang it with lanterns, perch stuffed birds in its branches and hire whistling machines. Do anything except bundle it up like a parcel."

For clients who can afford to spend £5,000 or more on a night's festivities, Hilton builds marquees lined with silk and satin. Parquet dance floors, crystal chandeliers and antique furnishings lend touches of splendour.

Some years ago, he had just finished an ornate ballroom, and was waiting for the guests to arrive, when the bandleader walked in and declared that the party would be a flop. There is too much space," he said. "The guests will feel lonely and miserable."

Hilton promptly reduced the size of the room by putting up trellis screens and banks of flowers. "The party was a success," he says. "Since then, I have made a point of planning parties so that they are slightly crowded."

An Armful Of Tiaras

His most hectic assignment was a party which began in a modest way. The hostess indicated that it was to be a quiet, homely gathering, but as the day for the event drew near, Hilton was instructed to put up marquees, floodlight the garden and arrange for expensive foods. In addition, he provided a fleet of children's paddle boats for guests to amuse themselves on the hostess's lake.

The party went with a swing. At its height, he walked around gathering armfuls of tiaras, taken off by tired women guests, and handing them to detectives.

Early next morning, as his vans were leaving after the marquees had been dismantled, he heard shouts from a corner of the garden. He found two men guests, in evening dress, clinging to the upper branches of a tree.

"They had climbed there at midnight as a brave gesture, and were too scared to get down. My responsibilities at that party ended with providing the men with a ladder—and lending them their taxi fares home."

THE END

Castle Minerva

by VICTOR CANNING

ILLUSTRATED BY FANCETT

I'd met her three times, and fallen in love. But that was before I knew her friends were kidnappers and murderers

WHEN I TOOK a tutoring job at a quiet little coastal resort in the South of France, I didn't expect to get mixed up in a cloak-and-dagger affair. I might have guessed I would though, since the man who'd hired me was my old friend, Colonel Drexel, a British secret agent.

My name is David Fraser and I'm a schoolmaster. Drexel asked me to tutor a boy during the Easter holidays. I wasn't keen but I accepted straightaway, because I owed Drexel so much—he had saved my life during the war.

So Easter found me at the Villa Maruba, near Banyuls, being looked after by Drexel's manservant, Brindle. The villa was virtually a fortress, surrounded by high walls and guarded by dogs.

My pupil hadn't arrived and I'd been told nothing about him. My orders were simply to wait. I passed the time idling around the town—and met Sophie Orbais. Or she met

me, deliberately. That was all right with me, because I'd never met a girl I liked so much. I wondered what she was up to, though, and when I found she was involved with a couple of tough customers named Sarrasin and Paviot I wondered still more.

I was spending a lot of time thinking about Sophie when I was jerked back to the job in hand. I got orders—typical Drexel-style orders—to take the villa launch and rendezvous with a cargo boat. Secretly. By night.

I met the boat and two shadowy figures dropped down from her into the launch: Drexel . . . and my pupil. The boy was musical—he played the mouth-organ on the way back—but that was all I knew about him until he was safely locked up in a bedroom at the villa and I had the key. Then at last Drexel explained.

My pupil was Prince Jabal Akhdar, heir to the Arab oil state of Ramaut. The regent, Sheik Ahmed ben Fa'id, had tried to keep control of Jabal to prevent him signing a document renewing British oil rights in Ramaut. Drexel had got the boy out—and now he was my pigeon until the Foreign Office took over.

It was the sort of coup Drexel would have revelled in, in his heyday. Now he seemed old, tired, embittered. I got the impression that he badly wanted someone to lean on—and I knew the someone was going to be me.

PART TWO

A Message From Sarrasin

NEXT morning, I had breakfast with the colonel. He was a different person, relaxed and cheerful, and eating like a horse. He even alluded to his mood of the previous evening.

"Take no notice of it, David. It's a reaction after I've carried a thing off. Just feel I want to raise the roof. Does me good, I suppose."

That morning he was going to the Consulate in Marseilles, to send a message to the Foreign Office. I saw him off. He drove an old Bentley with an open tonneau. It was just his sort of car, splendidly shabby and powerful.

When he was gone, Jabal and I went out in the launch to bathe. I liked him at once; a lean, finely-built youth with short, slightly curly, black hair. He joked and laughed, swam and played his mouth-organ. We talked about his school and the orchestra he had organized there—he played the drums and saxophone—but, although no reference was made to the real reasons for his presence here, there were moments when he was silent and brooding.

After lunch Jabal went up to his room to sleep. I went with him to lock him in. I felt



I had been thinking of her, and now here she

a bit like a jailer and to shed my own embarrassment, I said: "I'm sorry about this."

He smiled at me. "It is necessary."

I locked him in and went downstairs. I told Brindle I was going for a walk. The colonel had left his key with Brindle, and I asked him to keep an eye on Jabal when he let him out.

I did not go into Banyuls. I turned off the road and went across a field of vines to the sea. I found a little dip in the low cliffs, a hollow full of a tall, flowering, rush-like plant like amaryllis, and lay down with my hands behind my head and stared up at the sky.

I must have dozed off. Something awakened me, and for a moment I rested with my eyes shut, my lids a red curtain between me and the sun. Then the redness darkened and I felt the movement of a shadow across my face. I opened my eyes slowly.

Sophie was above me, standing between me and the sun so that I could see the outline of her body through the silk dress she wore. It was a firm, beautiful silhouette, and the sight of her there, immobile, looking down at me, seemed right and expected, for in my slight sleep I had been, not dreaming, but thinking about her in wide, lazy splashes of thought.

I said: "Hallo, how did you get here?" My voice was lazy with sleep still as I reached up a hand to her.

She sat down at my side, smiling. "You were asleep and you were frowning. Why?"

I laughed gently, playing with her hand. "Maybe because I was dreaming or thinking



The colonel put his hand on my shoulder. "I'm sorry, David, I can't take your word unless it's proved"



was, silhouetted against the sky. I lay there, gazing at her, lazy in the warm sun. She smiled. "You were asleep and you were frowning. Why?"

about you and I wanted the real person."

She was silent for a moment. "The real person? The real thing? How do you tell? Can you touch it? See it? And when you find it . . . how do you keep it?"

She laughed and then went on quickly so that it was almost as though she hadn't spoken: "There's a little black beetle crawling over your collar."

She leaned forward and picked it off and her face was very close to mine so that I could see the small creases of her lips and how the line of lipstick near one corner of her mouth was delicately blurred, and her eyes were deep and still like polished, smoky marble.

I kissed her, and she was in my arms with her face against my neck and her body under my hands was warm and live. I wanted to gather her up, to walk away with her, away from Banyuls, away from whatever it was that brought the look into her eyes when I said it was time to go back to George Sarrasin and Astar Paviot . . . to carry her away from everything she and I knew.

FOR a long time I held her. The afternoon sun was hot upon us and the bees and flies noisy in the amaryllis-like blooms around us. When she did move and lay back, shielding her eyes from the sun, the movement brought the opening of her dress apart where the top button was undone. Just under the shoulder was a dark bruise. Gently, I put my finger tips to it and then kissed it and then, as I sat up, I

was angry in a way I had never been before.

"Somebody hit you," I said.

She shook her head. The trapped, apprehensive look was in her eyes again.

"Somebody hit you. Who was it?"

I waited and eventually she said, "George." I kept my anger down now, but I was going to have it all. "Why?"

"He wanted me to do something I didn't want to do. He has a quick temper, but it means nothing."

"A bruise like that! What did he want?" And then I saw it. "Was it something to do with me?"

"Yes."

She was making no defence. Just answering, her voice without any shades of feeling.

I said, "Is there anything between you and George or Astar?"

"Only business."

"You knocked over your bag on purpose in the aquarium—to get to know me?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"They told me to. They want something from you. At first I didn't mind . . . but later it was different. You know why."

"What do they want from me?"

"It is difficult to explain. . . . Around Banyuls, you must have heard, there is smuggling. Things coming over from Africa. At the villa where you stay there is a launch. They would pay you. . . . All you have to do is to leave the key in the boathouse door one

evening and take it back the next morning. I do not ask you to do this. I am telling you what they want." She was silent for a moment then she put out her hand and took mine. "David. . . ."

It was the first time she had used my name and with it all my anger went.

"They're a lot of swine. I've got to get you away from them."

She said nothing to that. Her hand held mine tighter. After a moment she said, "What do I tell them?"

"Tell them I said they could go to hell. They won't take that as a final answer. But I want time to think . . . about us."

I WAS thinking, too, about Drexel and Jabal. I was in no position to charge off and square up to George Sarrasin. For the moment I was tied to the Villa Maruba.

I stood up and pulled her up with me and put my arms around her. "They know nothing about us?"

"No."

"Then don't let them, Sophie. In a little while I can fix it . . . a little while."

"I can wait . . . waiting is no longer important."

I kissed her and we walked to the road together. She went back towards Banyuls and I went on to the villa. But before we parted I said, "You can tell me what it is; the thing that holds you to them?"

"Yes, but not now. After this afternoon, I

am not ready. If you had not seen the bruise I would not have asked you about the launch today."

I didn't force her. But I promised myself that some time I would have the pleasure of leaving my mark on George Sarrasin.

On the way to the villa I thought the whole thing over. I was under an obligation to tell Drexel all about it. I didn't think it had anything to do with Jabal—but it might. And not to tell him would have been stupid.

My decision to do this was strengthened by a small core of suspicion, which I could not disperse, that somewhere, somehow, the whole thing was a little too pat and convenient. The only thing which was natural and unplanned was my relationship with Sophie.

I meant to tell him that evening. I had dinner with Jabal and afterwards we played a game of chess. It was midnight before we went to bed and the colonel had not returned. I heard his car come in at about three, but it was too late then to get up and bother him.

I was up at six the next morning, for I had promised to take Jabal out for an early morning swim. I pulled a towelling dressing-gown over my swimming trunks and then turned to find the key of Jabal's room among the stuff from my pockets which I had emptied on to the dressing-table. I couldn't find the key. I had a moment of panic as I ran along to his room, but he was there. The door was locked and I could hear him playing his mouth-organ softly, waiting to be released.

I went along to the colonel's room. He was still thick with sleep, and when I asked to borrow his key of Jabal's room he slipped his hand under his pillow and flicked it across to me and was back in sleep before I had left the room.

JABAL and I had our swim about a mile offshore. The water was as smooth as treacle, with faint trails of morning mist curling lazily over it, and the surface was marked with a wonderful pattern of slow currents and colours. Its beauty was lost on me. Most of the time I was worrying about my key.

Back in the villa, as I went along to my room, the colonel called to me. The door of his bedroom was half open and he was standing before his dressing-table, brushing his hair.

"David. . . . I was half asleep when you came in. What's all this about your key?"

It seems to have disappeared."

"What?" He turned round quietly, at once alert. "When did you have it last?" There was the beginning of crispness in his voice.

"As far as I know, late yesterday afternoon."

"Who locked him up last night?"

"Brindle. He came up with us and while I was fumbling for my key he got out yours. I've looked everywhere in my room for the damned thing but I can't find it. I must have dropped it somewhere. . . ."

He was looking fixedly at me and I could see his eyes had begun to take on a touch of the God-damn-you expression. "You're not the kind of man who drops things."

"I didn't think I was. . . ." I could feel the hesitation in myself and a kind of stupid, schoolboy guilt which made me wish I had sat up for him the night before and told him what I had wanted to have him know. He saw that, too, for he knew me, knew the shades that could take a man's voice and face.

"Cough it up, David. Something's on your mind."

I told him then, about Sophie and the two men: everything except the real thing that lay between Sophie and myself, because that, at the moment, wasn't something I wanted to share with anyone.

At first I thought he was going to take it calmly. "Maybe you're right," he said. "This coast is thick with smugglers. Maybe it's just a coincidence."

Then he paused and his face went hard and

I saw the quick flick of his eyelids as he went on thinking, his mind laying out the whole panorama of possibilities and not liking the view.

When he spoke, his voice was an echo from the past, the voice of the man who drove hard and demanded obedience to the point of fanaticism. "You're a bloody fool, David. I'm not paying you five hundred pounds for a picnic. You should have known you had to keep to yourself. Jabal's dynamite. He could blow up in our faces at any moment. Don't you see, until the F.O. take him over everything's got to go right. It's got to go right!"

And then, though I was to blame, I couldn't help but see the difference in him. In the old days he didn't blast you to hell. He looked and said a few words and there was gall and wormwood, contempt and yet understanding in them, and then he left you to sort out your own punishment while he went on to a consideration of measures to put things right. But this cry—*It's got to go right*—was full of strain.

Hearing it, I hated myself for bringing it on him. I wanted everything to go right for him. And, although I was the immediate cause of his distress, I had the odd feeling then that our positions were now reversed. No matter how inadequate I was, I was now responsible for him. I had to protect him and see that this thing he had started came through without any hitch. So I didn't mind when he said:

"What about this woman? Could she have lifted the key from you?"

"It could be. But I don't think so."

He looked at me queerly and I wondered if he had detected anything in my voice.

"All right," he said, turning away and slipping into his linen jacket. "Johnson from the Foreign Office should be here today some time. We'll check on these people just to be sure."

And then he put a hand on my arm and squeezed it. "Don't be such a casual, friendly so-and-so, David—not when you're working for me. You should have given that trio a wide berth the moment you saw they were interested in you. However," he laughed, "who am I to tell someone to steer clear of a pretty girl? I still have that kind of trouble."

WE all had breakfast together and the thing was not mentioned again. But afterwards he kept Jabal company and I think he did so because he knew what I would want to do.

I went off, along my old route of the previous day, looking for the key. I searched around in the little dip where Sophie and I had been, but I couldn't find it. I asked myself frankly, kicking out all emotion, whether I thought Sophie had taken it. But I couldn't accept that.

I went down into Banyuls in the hope of seeing her. I was unlucky. I had a drink in the

Café aux Bons Enfants and when Jean Cagou, the *espadrille* salesman, came and chatted to me, I asked him about the three. He knew nothing about them.

Instead of going back by the road, I kept along the coast track towards the villa and, about a quarter of a mile before I reached it, I dropped down between a break in the low cliffs and found myself in a little hollow. A small tent had been pitched under a clump of pine trees and alongside the tent stood a dusty motor-cycle with a "GB" plate. As I stood there a groan came from the tent.

I MOVED round to the front and looked in. The Englishman whom I had seen in the Café aux Bons Enfants was inside. He was in a sleeping-bag and sat up as he saw me. Although he looked doleful and unhappy, I had to smile. His pyjama jacket was open and his hands were clasped across his stomach. He was plump, not very big, and at first sight gave the impression of coming to pieces, of being scattered in parts around the untidy tent. His false teeth were in a glass at the head of the tent. He wore a soft, light brown toupee with a curl and central parting that reminded me of a chairman of an old-time music hall. His clothes were scattered all over the place.

"You in trouble?" I asked.

"Yes. Crab." Despite his condition, his voice had a boom in it, a kind of public-house voice, the voice which is uplifted in withering sarcasm above all others at a football match. "Shouldn't eat it, but I do."

He eyed me up and down, then went on: "Seen you at the Bons Enfants, haven't I? You English?"

"Yes, I am. Can I do anything for you?"

"A nice cup of tea might save me from dyin'. What I really need is a new stomach." He belched loudly and thumped his chest.

I sorted out his kettle and portable stove. As I prepared the tea, we chatted. He told me his name was Dunwoody, Leslie Dunwoody, from Walthamstow, London. He had chosen himself a spot quite close to the villa. He might be a genuine camper, but he might not.

"Have you been here long?" I asked.

"Nearly a week."

I handed him a mug of tea. He sipped at it and then said: "I was headin' for Spain, but if I start having these turns I don't think I'll go." He belched again more gently. "Can't stand anything cooked in oil. Limits you, you know, when you're abroad."

We talked a little more and then I left him. I got back to the villa in time for lunch and told the colonel about him.

"I'll wander over and look at him—just in case," he said.

He did that afternoon. I was in the garden

Brindle lay there on the floor, groaning gently. I stepped past him and looked into the room. It was empty. Jabal had gone



with Jabal when he returned. We were lying sun-bathing by the boathouse. As he came down by the pines, I thought his face looked reflective, almost careworn. But seeing us, he smiled. "He was asleep, David. What a mess that tent was! Never been in the army, that's clear. But he looks harmless to me."

He sat down and smoked a cigarette, and then after a while he said: "I've had a phone call from Johnson. He's at Perpignan and wants to see me. He thinks it wiser if he doesn't come here. I shall go after tea."

Colonel Drexel left in his car just after four o'clock. Perpignan was about an hour's drive away, and he told me that he did not anticipate that he would be late back.

I was having a drink before dinner, waiting for Jabal to come down, when the telephone in the hall began to ring. I got up and went to it.

A voice, speaking in French, said: "Is that Mr. Fraser?"

I said: "Yes. Who is that?"

My question was ignored and the voice went on: "Sophie tells us that you are not happy about our suggestion."

"What Sophie tells you is right."

It was Sarrasin, and I saw no need to let any friendliness into my words.

SARRASIN laughed. "Just leave the key in the boathouse door tonight. No one will ever know anything. And you will have made some very easy money."

I said: "Go to hell!"

"About the money. In a few days we shall make a deposit in your name at any Crédit Lyonnais you name. Say at Perpignan?"

"You can say what you like. But keep away from this place. Tonight, or any night!"

He went on quickly: "Such a small thing to do. Tonight, then? No other night will do. You understand these things—"

I might have been talking to a stranger on a crossed line.

I said fiercely: "Look, Sarrasin—get this fixed in that wooden head of yours—"

He laughed and rang off.

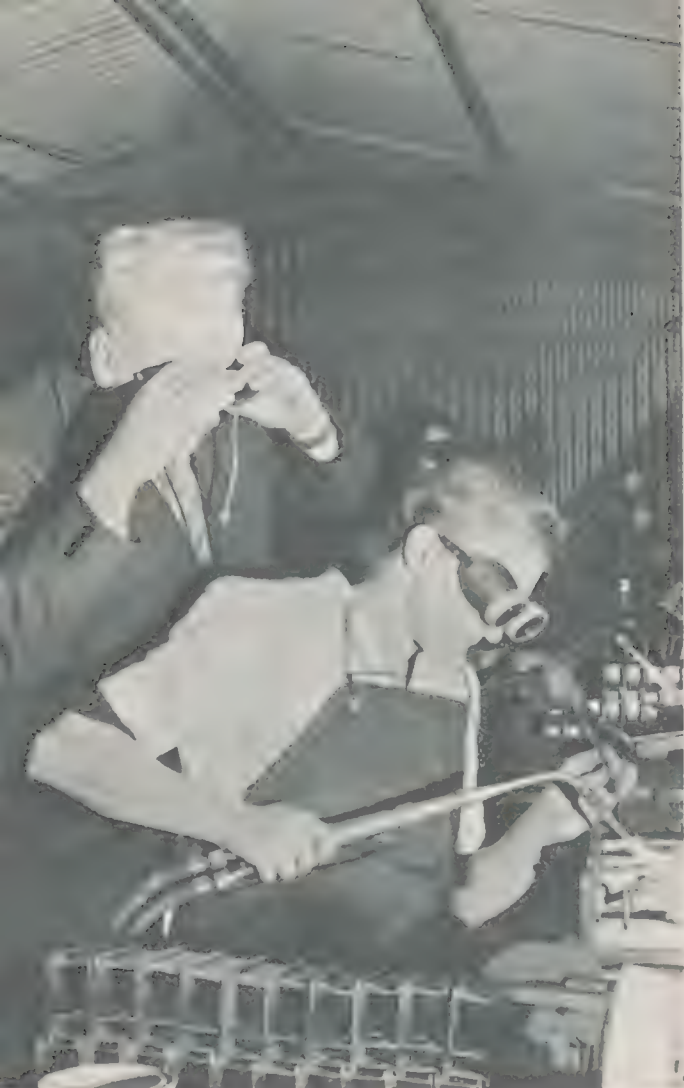
I slammed the phone down and went back to the lounge. Why the devil should they think I would help them? Why persist when I made it clear that I wouldn't? And why give me warning that they meant to come?

I spent half an hour trying to understand and couldn't. In the end I went out into the hallway and got on the telephone to the British Consulate in Marseilles.

The man I wanted was not in. It took me five angry minutes to convince whoever it was on the line that there was such a person as Drexel—though I knew damned well that he knew all about the colonel—and another two

Continued on page 48





Lane—watching a worker brazing stove parts with an oxy-acetylene flame—once “rescued” a motor car by burning off a garage padlock



Oxy-acetylene cuts through iron like a knife through cheese. Lane (right) and assistants used it to sever an iron block six feet thick

George Lane sells the invisible

by ARTHUR STANHOPE

No one, he says, can see, smell or touch the oxygen he sells. But it may save a life, conquer Everest, or cut a wedding ring to fit

A FEW MINUTES AFTER setting out with his demonstration van one recent morning, George Lane, an oxygen salesman, was hailed by an acquaintance standing by the door of a lock-up garage. The man had lost his garage key and needed his car urgently. He asked Lane if he could help. Lane unloaded a set of oxy-acetylene equipment and burned off the padlock.

“It was almost as easy as cutting a piece of string with scissors,” says Lane. “But if a stranger ever asked me for that kind of help one dark evening, I should start looking for the nearest policeman.”

Lane, a bushy-haired, affable man, is employed by a firm that extracts gases from the air for industrial and medical uses. “I sell people something they can’t see, can’t smell, and can’t touch,” he says. After twenty years on the job, he still meets surprises. Once, he found a baker using an oxy-acetylene blowpipe flame to put a crisp, brown top on his buns. On another occasion, he saw an undertaker using oxygen and acetylene to weld the joints of a lead coffin before placing it in a family vault.

Costs Cut, Output Increased

As part of his routine, Lane visits farmers to persuade them to repair their farm implements with gas welding equipment. One farmer asked for a pipe-supply of oxygen to be laid through his farm buildings, even to the pigsty. He suffered from asthma, and wanted to be able to tap oxygen whenever he felt an attack coming on.

Oxygen—roughly one-fifth of the air everybody breathes, with the other four-fifths mainly nitrogen—is Lane’s chief selling line. Steel-makers feed millions of cubic feet of oxygen into furnaces to increase the heat, so saving fuel and increasing output. Engineering firms use industrial gases to cut and weld metals.

Lane’s firm, which has thirty-four factories and ten thousand employees, finds that moving gases from place to place is a bigger headache than getting gases out of the air. One million heavy cylinders are in use today, nearly 400,000 of them for medical gases. As eight shillings-worth of gas might be sent out in a cylinder that has cost £10, the cylinders are some of the most valuable “empties” there are.

Every cylinder is painted a distinct colour so that its users know what gas is inside. Black indicates oxygen, maroon acetylene, and blue is for argon (an inert gas that provides an air-excluding blanket when joints have to be made in light or precious metals). Bright red cylinders hold coal gas or hydrogen. Grey cylinders with a black neck contain nitrogen. Air itself, compressed, is carried in plain grey cylinders.

Lane finds that some of his customers fail to

realize the dangers they face from a too-casual use of gases. Intrigued by a recent order from a large store for a cylinder of hydrogen, he called in to see how they intended to use it. He found that the store’s publicity manager wanted to inflate toy balloons with hydrogen and give them to customers’ children. The balloons had the store’s name printed on them, and the publicity manager considered that the youngsters would be fine walking advertisements as they carried their balloons through the streets.

Quickly, Lane reminded him that hydrogen is an inflammable gas suitable only for balloons that are released outdoors as soon as they are filled. A lighted cigarette in a crowded store or on a busy pavement could set off the toy balloons in a flash of flame. “The order for hydrogen was cancelled,” says Lane, “but the store carried on with their idea. I sold them a cylinder of compressed air which could do no harm.”

Early this summer, Lane himself faced the risk of a hydrogen explosion when he was called in to send up 1,500 balloons at the end of the successful £1,000,000 appeal for the restoration of Westminster Abbey. In a tent near the Abbey, Lane and five other men filled the balloons with hydrogen, allowing each one to shoot up to the roof of the tent as it was filled. They began at seven thirty in the morning, and by noon the 1,500 balloons were bulging against the canvas. Then four choirboys ceremoniously pulled cords that lifted the tent top and sent all the balloons swirling northwards over the London rooftops.

“It’s a wonder that all of us didn’t go swirling up long before then,” says Lane. “We discovered as we worked that static electricity was building up inside the tent. A spark among all that inflammable hydrogen would have made quite a bang.”

Like Jet-engined Lawn Mower

While delivering compressed air cylinders to a small factory, one of the firm’s drivers noticed a number of boys working footpumps to keep up pressure for paint sprays. “Good for you,” one boy called. “Now we can save our leg muscles.” The shop foreman intended to connect the paint sprays with the compressed air cylinders. He changed his mind when the driver pointed out that until he had alterations made to his spraying equipment, linking it with a compressed air cylinder would be like fitting a lawn mower with a jet engine.

Gases in a liquid state must have a safety outlet. Tom Treby, driver of a six-wheeled tanker which can carry eight tons of liquid oxygen, equal to about 200,000 cubic feet of the gas, is often amused as fellow-drivers listen with concern to the constant hissing caused by evaporation of the liquid oxygen. When Treby



As liquid oxygen (at minus 183 degrees Centigrade) is delivered, Lane is caught in a mist due to the effect of the cold on the surrounding air

stops at a café, other drivers constantly wander out to inspect their tyres, and then come back with the warning, "Somebody's got a slow puncture out there."

Some years ago, hospital authorities discovered that the trundling of heavy oxygen cylinders to bedsides had a bad psychological effect on patients. Elderly people, particularly, could not rid themselves of the mistaken idea that oxygen is brought in only when death is near. To offset this worry, since the war nearly three hundred hospitals have been fitted with pipelines, coloured to indicate which gas they carry. When a patient needs oxygen a nurse simply connects a mask or oxygen tent to the nearest bedside plug.

A hospital that had been fitted with pipes during the war brought a puzzling problem to one of Lane's colleagues. He was sent to investigate an extraordinary jump in oxygen consumption, reported by the matron. He found no sign of a leak, but discovered that the extra gas was being used in the night. Eventually he discovered that, because the wards grew stuffy while black-out screens covered the windows, patients were tapping the plugs to freshen the atmosphere.

At another hospital, gas wastage was traced to patients who plugged into the pipeline to inflate their pneumatic mattresses. Another leak was traced to a ward that held as patients a number of Scots soldiers. One day they were found playing their bagpipes with the mouth-pieces connected to the oxygen plugs.

Medical gases often help to save life, and Lane's colleagues in the firm's medical division are trained to a keen sense of urgency when a

call for gas reaches them. During the five-day London "smog" in December, 1952, an urgent call came to the Brentford office, just outside London, where a staff is on duty night and day to send out medical gases. A man in a private house ten miles away was acutely distressed by the fog and needed oxygen.

Visibility was down to five yards that evening. All buses were stopped and hundreds of cars lay abandoned at the kerbside. Two of the firm's drivers set out with an oxygen cylinder in a van. One walked in front with a lamp attached by a lead to a battery in the van, which crawled behind him. The two men took four hours to reach the house shortly after midnight. A woman quickly opened the door, anxiously said, "Ah, there you are," took the cylinder and closed the door again. Without even a cup of tea to warm them on their foggy way, the drivers walked the ten miles back.

An Apology Came Weeks Later

"We had some hard thoughts that night," says Albert Barrett, one of the drivers. "But we felt better a few weeks later when a letter of apology and thanks came to the office." Too anxious about her ailing husband at the time, the woman had not realized until the crisis had passed that somebody had undergone a night of discomfort to deliver the oxygen.

"One moment, oxygen is going down to deep-sea divers, the next it is being taken to the top of Everest," says Lane. Two types of oxygen climbing set were used last year by the British Everest Expedition. With the "open circuit" set, the climbers inhaled air enriched by oxygen and then breathed out into open air. With the

"closed circuit" set—Hillary and Tensing each wore one on their last stage to the top—the climbers inhaled a high concentration of oxygen. They breathed out through a canister containing soda lime, which absorbed the carbon dioxide so that the exhaled oxygen could be breathed in again.

Chances of using his knowledge of gases are rarely missed by Lane. Leaving his home at Wembley Park one day in October, 1952, he followed the clanging bells of ambulances and fire engines to Harrow where three trains had smashed into a tangled heap of wood and steel, killing 112 people. He worked through the night helping to organize the oxygen supply for rescue teams using oxy-acetylene cutters.

On another occasion, he heard a married secretary in the company's offices complaining that her gold wedding ring was too loose. He took it away, and, using oxygen and coal-gas mixture, cut it to the right size. Within ten minutes he was back with the ring, which was then a perfect fit.

During a routine call at a film studio a few years ago, Lane heard that a war film was held up because the director was not satisfied with a scene showing flashes of machine-gun fire. Remembering that when the flame is not properly adjusted in an oxy-acetylene blowpipe, the blowpipe backfires and there is a small flash with the bang, he took a blowpipe and deliberately mishandled it so that it rapidly flashed and backfired.

The director was delighted with the effect, and when the film was shown no one suspected that the machine-gun fire was anything but the real thing.

THE END

'The General comes home

by GARNETT RADCLIFFE

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN PHILLIPS

He stood there in his old dinner jacket, hurt and angry.
Young puppies! This was his club before they were born!

MAJOR-GENERAL CLAIRE-CAVAN got out of the taxi which had taken him from Euston to the Horse and Foot Club in Lord Street with something of the feelings of a schoolboy home for the holidays.

He had lived in Ireland on his pension, and it was nearly twenty years since he had last visited the club, which was full of happy memories. The Snort—as the Horse and Foot was generally called—had been a second home when he was still on the active list. It was a place where you could always be sure of meeting a crony. It was comfortable, reasonable in price, and there was a decent cellar.

Emily, his wife, had disapproved the idea of his spending this holiday at the Snort.

"You'll find everything very changed," she had warned him. "Why not go to some quiet hotel in Bournemouth?"

The major-general had glared at her. "The Snort is my club."

He paid off his taxi and stood looking round. At once he was aware that the changes of which Emily had warned him had taken place.

The exterior of the Snort was no longer as monasterial as he remembered. It had been



freshened up, and to his mind somewhat cheapened. In place of the Turkish cannon that used to flank the entrance, there were flower-boxes. A revolving door had replaced the original one, and he saw a sign: "To the Ladies' Annexe."

Even worse, old Sergeant Mullins, the one-armed doorman, was no longer there. He had been looking forward to being greeted by Mullins. Mullins had been a feature of the Snort.

The new doorman was just a youngster. In his disappointment, Major-General Claire-Cavan spoke sharply. "I'll be staying here. Take that bag in. Who's the secretary now?"

"Secretary, sir?"

"Yes. I want a room."

"You'd better have a word with the receptionist, sir."

In the entrance lounge he stopped and stared. They'd ruined the place! The tiger-skin, the mounted heads, the leather armchairs had all vanished. There were glass-topped tables and wicker chairs. It looked like a Y.M.C.A. hostel rather than the club he had known.

In the corner where the suit of armour used to be, there was a sort of glass birdcage affair. Receptionist's office! Wrathfully, he strode over and addressed himself to the henna-haired lady who sat inside.

"I want a room for a week. I'm a country member. Major-General Claire-Cavan."

She looked unimpressed. "I'm afraid you're unlucky. An American captain booked the last room this morning."

"But I'm a country member! I paid a life subscription when I left the service. Have all the rooms reserved for country members been taken?"

"All that's changed since the war. We don't reserve rooms now. If you cared to double-up with someone. . . ."

At that, Major-General Claire-Cavan really let himself go.

"Double-up?" he roared. "No, young woman, I will not double-up. Is there a committee member in the club? I'm going to make a complaint. If I can't get a room I'll demand my subscription back."

He was making a scene, and he didn't care. Confounded impudence! He'd used the Snort before these whippersnappers were born!

IN the end a room was found. It was a very small room; one a subaltern wouldn't have taken in the old days. This was a fine home-coming! Only that he did not want to give Emily the satisfaction of saying, "I told you so," he would have moved to a hotel.

He felt better when he had had a bath and had changed into the antiquated dinner jacket Emily had brushed and packed with loving care. Now for a sherry before dinner! With any luck he'd meet a friend or two and have a jaw.

He went down to what used to be the ante-room. It had been transformed into a snack bar. Through a glass door he glimpsed a young man in a duffel-coat munching a sandwich.

The place was just a damned pub! He followed a sign "TO THE AMERICAN BAR" and went in. It was crowded. There were girls there as well as men; W.R.A.C. officers, he supposed. Nobody was properly dressed, and everybody seemed to be drinking gin and smoking cigarettes.

At his entrance, eyes turned and voices stopped. Feeling lonely and conspicuous, he went to the bar and asked for a sherry. In the old days one's drink was brought to one decently on a salver, and one signed a chit. Now one stood at a bar and paid cash! Well, one had to move with the times.

Standing erect and disapproving like a ghost

"You'll find everything very changed," his wife had warned him. How right she had been! As he entered the bar, eyes turned and voices stopped



"I want your wallet and your watch," the man said. "Fork out and save yourself a bashing"

from the past, he drank the sherry, which was grocer's stuff, and took stock of the usurpers of the Snort. Some of them looked as if they could do with a haircut and a lot of drilling, he decided. But he was pining to speak to someone. Almost timidly, he addressed a youth standing beside him.

"They've made a lot of changes in this place. It must be—h'm!—it must be nearly twenty years since I was here last."

"Really, sir?"

"Yes. Twenty years is a long time. Can I buy you a drink?"

"No, thank you, sir."

"How do you like soldiering?"

"Oh, it's all right. Will you excuse me, sir? I've got a date."

"Well, cut along and keep it."

"Good night, sir."

Left alone, Major-General Claire-Cavan tugged his white moustache and glared at his own reflection in the mirror behind the bar. The boy didn't want to waste his evening talking to an old fogey. Well, he'd have felt just the same at his age. All the same, he felt hurt and angry. These cubs! By what right did they make him feel an outsider in his own club?

He finished his sherry and stalked out as if he was on parade. As he went through the door, he heard a voice with an exaggerated accent say: "When I was in Pooniah, old boy!" and there was a laugh.

Emily had been right! He wasn't going to dine in this place with these—these puppies. He'd go to a restaurant. Romano's or Frascati's—if those places still existed.

WHEN he'd attired himself with scarf, overcoat and bowler hat, and the tightly rolled umbrella he always carried in London, he altered his decision about going to a restaurant. He wasn't hungry; a walk would be more beneficial. In the morning he'd pack up and go to Bournemouth.

He left the Snort by the back entrance and took a black-cindered path running under trees to the Mall. It was cold and foggy and there were few people about. It was a night when an old man could walk alone with his ghosts.

They came to him as he walked. He saw himself as he had been on the first occasion he

had entered the sacred portals of the Snort. He hadn't even been commissioned then. He'd been a gentleman cadet, as they called them then, at the Royal Military College, the place people who hadn't been there called "Sandhurst."

The old R.M.C.! He wondered how the present-day youngsters would have liked it. Square-bashing for six months before you passed off the square. Life for a junior gentleman cadet had been pretty tough by any standards.

He remembered those Guards staff-sergeants, terrible men with waxed moustaches and brazen voices, whose business it had been to hammer gangling schoolboys into leaders of men.

What those fellows taught you, you never forgot. Even now he straightened his back and stepped more briskly when he thought of old Timber-toes, drill instructor of B Company. He could hear that raucous voice echoing round the square.

"Mr. Claire-Cavan, sir, I know a wooden-legged washerwoman can drill better than you. . . . Lift your feet up, sir—they're not that 'eavy!"

Even more terrible from the viewpoint of a junior gentleman cadet had been the sergeant they called the Dancing Dervish. He'd been a Welshman with a lilting voice and a gift for sarcasm. He recalled once being driven almost to tears when the Dancing Dervish had bawled—

"Got a light, guv'nor?"

Major-General Claire-Cavan stopped in his tracks. In his preoccupation he hadn't noticed the big man who had stepped very quietly from the shadows.

"A light? Certainly."

HE fumbled for his lighter, which was a good one—Emily's Christmas present. The flame showed him a coarse, sneering face. At the same time he realized that there wasn't another soul in the vicinity.

"Thanks, guv. . . . Got a fag for me to light?"

"I never give to able-bodied beggars. If you're hard-up you should join the army."

"Join the army! Come orf it, you old blow-hard! The army's looking for me now."

"You mean you're a deserter? Get out of my way! I won't give a penny to a deserter."

"Oh, yes, you will, Daddy. I want your wallet and your watch, too. Come on, fork out and save yourself a bashing."

"Keep your filthy hands off me!"

"Now, now, old cock—keep your temper."

A contemptuous push sent him staggering back. Had it not been for the fence he would have fallen. He struggled up. There were tears of anger and frustration in his eyes. If only he'd been forty years younger!

He couldn't fight this brute at his age. But that he of all people should be robbed by a deserter seemed the last drop in the cup of an old soldier's humiliation.

As he was about to produce his wallet there came to him across a gulf of years the voice of the Dancing Dervish roaring on the Royal Military College assault course.

"Miss Claire-Cavan, miss, that's a rifle and bayonet you're holding—not a flickering umbrella!"

A rifle and bayonet, not a flickering umbrella!

On the instant, Major-General Claire-Cavan smartly reversed his umbrella, catching it with the left hand eight inches below the ferrule and with his right just above the heavy, curved handle. *On guard!* Pace forward with the left foot, body balanced and leaning slightly forward, ferrule directed at the throat of the charging enemy.

Left parry! At the face—*point!* In, out, *on guard.* . . . Right parry. . . . At the face, at the throat, at the heart . . . in, out . . . in, out, *on guard!* And somewhere the ghost of the Dancing Dervish was bellowing: "Go in as if

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In twelve years of stunting, Connie Tilton has jumped from eleven bridges—including this leap at Westminster. Once she landed knee-deep in mud

Connie gambles with other people's danger

by JACK ATTACK

She risks her neck to keep film work safe for the stars—by falling down stairs, leaping from blazing cars or diving off Thames bridges

A STURDILY BUILT YOUNG WOMAN climbed on to a fire engine at St. Albans, Hertfordshire, one night last October and, with twelve men, clung to the sides as the engine plunged down a valley road and over a narrow bridge.

Not far from the bridge it ran into a thick wire stretched across the road. As the fire engine reared up, the woman threw herself off and landed on a gravel path. She somersaulted backwards and jumped to her feet—with her back to a group of film cameras.

Connie Tilton, one of Britain's leading stunt artists, was finishing a scene for a film, *Happy*

Ever After, in which she doubled for Yvonne de Carlo. Although Connie does not resemble the actress, cinema audiences did not notice the doubling. A previous scene was shot where Yvonne de Carlo climbed on to the fire engine, and a later scene where she jumped up from the gravel path and ran towards a burning house. These scenes and the one with Connie Tilton were put together and audiences saw them as one uninterrupted sequence.

A twenty-five year old Midlander, with dark brown hair and blue eyes, Connie Tilton helps to put the punch into British and American films. In twelve years of film stunting, she has

jumped off eleven Thames bridges, fallen down 391 staircases and leaped off dozens of burning and crashing motor vehicles. By performing what she calls the "rough stuff," she has made film work safer for Esther Williams, Linda Darnell, Jean Kent, Margaret Lockwood, Vivien Leigh, Ann Todd, Margaret Rutherford and other artists.

"Connie," says a friend, "is a human shock absorber. People often cannot bear to watch when she begins a stunt, and film stars often ask her how she can do it."

Trapped In Burning Car

Not all her stunts are finished with smooth precision. For one film chase several years ago, she had to sit in the front seat of a car while the driver, another stunt artist, rolled it down a hill. When they had climbed out, the car was to be set on fire and filmed as it burned out.

But after the car careered down the bank and crashed, it burst into flames prematurely and the occupants were trapped. Grabbing a starting handle from the floor, Connie beat a hole in the canvas roof and struggled out with her colleague. "It was a close call," she says. "We discovered later that a mechanic had put too much petrol in the tank."

Despite the appearances of the job, she insists that it is not daredevil foolhardiness. "Stunting," she says, "is a science based on timing. Most accidents are caused by inexperience and technical mistakes."

Recently, as a thief in the film *Tread Softly*, she had to swing on a rope from the sixty foot high flies of a theatre to the middle of the stage, snatch a bag of gold that was tied to another rope, twist round and swing back to the ledge from where she started. In the next scene, she had to be struck on the head by a bamboo pole, lose her balance and double-somersault thirty feet into a net, landing on the points of her shoulders so that it looked like a head fall.

"It required perfect timing," she says. "Reshooting scenes like that could be a costly



Connie listens while a film director explains an idea. But even careful plans sometimes go wrong

business. I had to rehearse the sequence several times before I had it right."

Less complicated stunts are usually not rehearsed, as it has been found that the first reaction, particularly in falls, looks the most natural. But lack of rehearsal sometimes causes upsets.

After jumping thirty feet off Hammersmith Bridge, London, for a suicide scene in *The Seventh Veil* some years ago, Connie found herself knee-deep in mud. "The boatman had told me that there was eight feet of water at the bottom," she says. "Actually there was only five. It took some tugging to get me out."

In film-stunting, little padding is used. "We use it in the gymnasium for trying out new stunts," she says, "but it would give the game away if we used it in films, where we usually double for slender artists. I only wear it when I am doubling for someone larger than myself."

Sometimes, film stunts involve a lot of guesswork. In a sequence of *Street Corner*, Connie had to dive off Battersea Bridge, London, rescue a small boy and bring him to the bank. At night, with the full glare of arc lamps in her face, she could not see the water below. In *Caesar And Cleopatra* she was thrown over a parapet and fell forty feet into five feet of water, narrowly missing a cluster of rocks. "In both cases I made it safely, but more through good luck than careful planning."

Sudden Fall—By Accident

"People seem surprised at her coolness," says her agent, Jock Easton. Escaping from a castle in *Cardboard Cavalier* several years ago, she was carried backwards down a winding plaster staircase in the arms of another stunt artist, Paddy Ryan. To support Ryan while he swayed from side to side, the director rigged up a system of wiring. But as the two stunt artists swayed wildly down, a mechanic hoisted the wire instead of releasing it. Ryan shot ten feet in the air, tipped upside down and dropped Connie.

"She fell on to the staircase, rolled more than

twenty feet to the bottom and got up laughing," recalls an onlooker.

Coupled with Connie Tilton's coolness is a shrewd sense of judgment which tells her how far to go with a stunt.

Once, an actress for whom she was doubling in a film expressed haughty disappointment because Connie had landed on her shoulders rather than her head after a short fall from a fire escape.

Connie turned to her. "Don't be a fool," she said. "If you think it should be that realistic, do it yourself."

On The Stage At Three

Her determined attitude was developed early in life. Born in Market Harborough, Leicestershire, she settled with her family at Redhill, Surrey, when she was seven and attended the Italia Conti school in London. The daughter of a former English swimming champion, she began to learn swimming at the age of nine months. At three she went on stage in amateur acrobatics and at twelve joined a touring pantomime. A year later she was knocked over a pub bar in a stunt sequence for her first film.

Since then she has done stunts for more than two hundred films and played a handful of straight rôles. She has also worked in television and stage shows.

Some stunts are performed under exceptionally severe weather conditions. Doubling for Esther Williams in *The One-Piece Bathing Suit*, she had to swim under Tower Bridge in a temperature of thirty-five degrees. Because she had make-up on her arms and legs to make them more conspicuous against the water, she was not able to use oils on her body to keep her warm.

"Matters became worse," recalls a friend, "when a string of barges passed by and she was caught by the wash. She was out of sight for several minutes."

To keep fit, stunt artists practise rolls, falls, fights, weight-lifting and judo. Like prize-fighters, they develop their muscles through

gymnastics and skipping. Surplus weight is trimmed off by rugged country runs, when heavy clothes are worn under track suits. A typical stunt artist's equipment includes wrestling boots, plimsolls, bathing suits, sweaters, shorts, slacks, fencing masks and crash helmets.

As much as £100 has been paid for a single stunt. After a contract has been arranged, the stunt artist and the assistant director of the film discuss the ideas, and previous rushes are watched in the studio projection-room so that continuity of action is ensured. To study technique, artists may attend as many as five films in one week—especially Hollywood westerns—and watch for action sequences.

In scenes involving fires and explosions, asbestos suits may be worn or the clothing dampened. "Jumping from heights through fire is relatively easy since the flames do not have time to burn you—but we have to cover our faces with our arms as we go through," says Connie.

In one scene, where she was escaping from a blazing hospital ship, some explosive misfired and a crowd of extras, running clear of the blast, landed on top of her. "I had to lie very still until they had picked themselves up," she says. "Otherwise I might have broken a leg or an arm."

No Insurance Claim Yet

In fight sequences, artists usually punch slightly off-target and the sound effects are dubbed in. Complicated fight sequences, where crowds are involved, must be planned as carefully as the choreography of a ballet—and even then a slip can be made through wrong timing. When she was appearing in the stage show, *Date With Danger*, at the Liverpool Empire some years ago, Connie ducked to the wrong side as a colleague swung wildly at her. She finished the act seeing stars.

Though most insurance companies do not cover stunt artists, Connie is insured by Lloyd's, for a premium of £5 a year, on a block policy with eleven others. She has not yet had to claim compensation.

Though she has come to no serious harm in her work, Connie was once bitten on the nose by a monkey. Standing behind a rock with the monkey on her shoulder during the run of the water pantomime, *Robinson Crusoe*, at Bristol in 1949, she was to fire a rifle at a group of cannibals who had tied Man Friday to a stake. As a pistol was fired off-stage as a sound effect, the monkey thought it was being shot at and started clawing her. To escape, she plunged into the swimming pool and swam to the opposite end. "I didn't know monkeys had good memories," she says, "but when I saw it after the show it bit my nose."

Horse Charges At Cameras

Another stunt artist found himself in difficulty when his horse broke away from a crowd of charging knights in *Ivanhoe*. "It galloped down a steep slope, jumped sideways over another horse at the bottom and caught up with the front line," Connie recalls.

"Then, unable to cross a crowded bridge, it cleared an eight-foot ditch and made straight for the camera crew, who scattered in all directions, and sent the rider flying into the lower branches of a nearby tree. Tangled up in chain armour, he had to get two friends to help him down."

Though she is used to all sorts of reactions to her stunts by now, Connie is still amused by some. She had just climbed over the railing of Hammersmith Bridge to make a suicide jump when she heard a gentle voice behind her say: "Now, I wouldn't do that, dear. Think first."

Looking round, she saw an elderly woman who had not seen the camera or the crowds below the bridge. "I had to convince her that it was just a film," Connie says. "For a minute she was really upset."

THE END



"I must see the Chief at once," insisted Sir Charles, barely keeping his temper. The schoolmaster was suave. "Very unfortunately, the Chief is not here"

HELD TO RANSOM

by JONAS LAMPTEY

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

He announced who he was, demanded help. They smiled. Sir Charles Hipgrave, Chief Commissioner . . . What a big fish they had landed!

SIR CHARLES HIPGRAVE, C.M.G., Chief Commissioner of the Central Province, was about to proceed on leave prior to retirement. For twenty-eight years—"more than a quarter of a century," as he was fond of expressing it—he had served in this none too salubrious West African colony. He had won promotion and honours and now he was going home for the last time.

He was sorry his service had come to an end, and he sighed as he looked down from the Residency window at the many Europeans and Africans who had gathered in the drive beneath the palm trees to wish him goodbye. He had had a good time, on the whole, and he was proud of his success.

He was a little disappointed, of course. The governorship of the colony had fallen vacant and for a while he had hoped that perhaps . . . But they had selected Bootle-Smith, administrator of a small group of islands in the Southern Pacific. So that was that. It would have come too late, anyway. He had shipped most of his possessions home, and his wife had everything laid on in the house on the Sussex coast which they had bought last leave to settle down in.

His tall, bulky figure turned away from the window and he went down the staircase and through the hall where the Residency's white-uniformed steward-boys stood around grinning and wishing him a safe journey.

Out in the garden, he walked down the line of European residents and prominent Africans, pausing to shake hands and exchange a farewell word with each. And then a small group came forward and presented him with a piece of silver plate engraved with the signatures of twenty or thirty officers who had served under him. He was touched by this demonstration. They were genuinely sorry to see him go. A pleasing conclusion to a successful career.

THE young man who had been his secretary came up smartly as he stepped into his car. "The District Commissioner at Latuba has just phoned through, sir. He's expecting you to stay the night with him."

Latuba was the port two hundred miles away. The ship was due to sail at midday tomorrow. For a moment Sir Charles hesitated.

"That's very decent of him," he said. "But I've made other arrangements. Ring him up and give him my regrets, will you?"

The car slid forward. The onlookers waved. And then the car was moving down the avenue of palms and out through the entrance where the scarlet-coated sentry smacked the butt of his rifle as Sir Charles Hipgrave passed for the last time.

The car descended the green-banked road to the town, it passed the old fort where a governor had once been besieged, it passed the hospital whose construction owed so much to Sir Charles's persistent efforts, it manoeuvred the crowded African streets, it skirted the football ground named Hipgrave Park in his honour. It was through the town at last and on the wide laterite road that went cutting through the forest

to the sea a couple of hundred miles away.

No, he would not accept Dick Armstrong's offer of hospitality. They were old friends, they had come out in the same ship, and if he were going to spend his last night in Latuba the house of old Strongarm would be the natural choice.

But he had a whim, and that was to spend his last night in Africa at Assabassa, a village in the forest half-way to the coast and some thirty miles off the main road, where he had spent his first night in the country twenty-eight years ago. He had never been there since. No one of importance ever visited Assabassa now. With the opening twenty years ago of the road on which he was at present travelling, Assabassa had lost its earlier significance.

But if one were travelling up from the coast a quarter of a century ago, Assabassa resthouse was the first night-stop. That was how young Hipgrave had come to stay there. He had been ordered straight from the ship to the lorry and had come jolting into Assabassa in the evening, much shaken but intensely keen. And, twenty-eight years later, he was fascinated by the prospect of spending his last night there as well. That was why he had in his car now his cook and his full camping equipment.

To round off his career in this way seemed

particularly apt. He was going to have his last twenty-four hours in this country to himself, in the place which had seen the start of his colonial career.

He would have to give some sort of explanation at Latuba tomorrow, of course. They would all be wanting to know where he had been, and he wouldn't want to confess to his eccentricity. But he would think up something plausible. He would, in another of his favourite phrases, cross that bridge when he came to it.

CLOUDS of dust pursued the car as it ran on through the great overspreading trees. At every village, Sir Charles, considerate as ever, ordered his driver to slow down and spare the people some of the dust stirred up by the car, and he looked for the last time at the mud houses, the arresting newness of the ironmongery outside the petty stores, the occasional derelict and rusting lorry by the roadside, the deep, soil-eroded ditches, the groups of skinny old men sitting round the tree in the centre of the village.

Twenty-eight years. Had he really achieved so much? In villages like these he was doubtful. But he did have something to show, after all. Mobile clinics, for example, which visited a

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"The road no good," announced the driver. "We no fit pass." Sir Charles looked ahead and cursed

JOURNEY INTO BRITAIN

SMUGGLERS' COUNTRY

by *HARRY HOPKINS*

In leisurely Weymouth, with its air of Georgian elegance, and brooding Portland, hardy as its famous stone, lies the story of giant brandy flasks, secret paths . . . and wreckers' beaches



THE FLEET WAS IN PORT AGAIN—or, at least, some of it was, and the narrow streets of Weymouth were full of hurrying figures in dark naval raincoats. In the lounge of my hotel three well-to-do but anxious mothers, down to visit National Service sons on brief shore leave, sat fearfully exchanging naval reminiscences.

" . . . All John does is scrub the deck."

"Yes, that's all Peter does, too—and he said a most *illiterate* man was telling him 'Clean them winders' and that sort of thing. . . ."

" . . . No hygiene in the navy at all, and the wash-basins are just *filthy*. You know, what we're afraid of is that one day he'll answer back and get into trouble, or something. . . ."

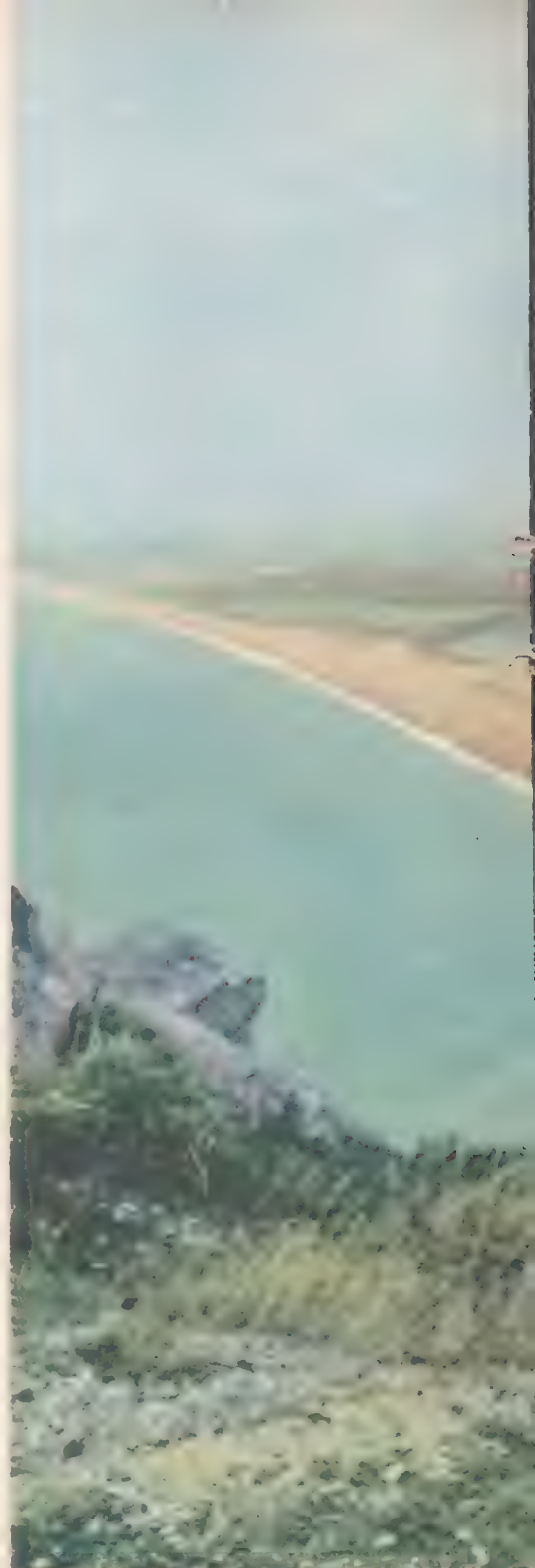
Outside, on the promenade, King George III, apparently left cold by these maternal misgivings, gazed stolidly out from his broad high plinth, flanked by the gold-painted lion and the white-painted unicorn. Complete with crown, escutcheon, sceptre, British flag and piled volumes, he made a truly regal figure in his red and white, gold-edged cutaway coat.

Weymouth, after all, was the first seaside resort in our history to be patronized by a reigning British monarch—and Weymouth does not forget it or allow anyone else to forget it, either.

The King, in fact, had stayed at this very hotel, then Gloucester Lodge, erected by the Duke of Gloucester as a seaside residence; a copper plaque duly appeared outside, on the gatepost, to bear witness to this glamorous fact. Not to be outdone, the rival hotel, a few doors away, riposted with its own plaque, stating that it occupied the site of the Assembly Rooms frequented by the King on his visits to Weymouth. But the Gloucester could beat that any day of the week. It had the Bath—the actual bath used by His Majesty—a marble and somewhat uncomfortable-looking tank, planted out

The Portlanders' surnames can almost tell the story of their island. . . . In a cliff top quarry, Jack Stone (left) and Ron Cutting (centre) work with Tommy Hoskins—and they are cutting stone

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON



From Portland, the long sweep of Chesil Beach genteel, still revering George III . . . and Po

on a sort of pedestal mound in the back garden. This, presumably, was the bath in which His Majesty was "hardened," as prescribed by his physician, Dr. Gisborne, by a series of warm salt-water baths—a sort of battle-course leading up to the final ordeal of marine immersion from one of the newly invented bathing machines.

It is an endearing story. When the great day, undoubtedly the greatest in Weymouth's history, dawned on Sunday, July 7, 1789, the local children appeared in red, white and blue bandeaux, the bargemen sported loyal cockades, the bathing women sashes of purple about their ample waists.

The Royal bathing machine duly trundled down to the water's edge. "Think of the surprise of His Majesty," Fanny Burney noted in her diary, "when, the first time of his bathing, he had no sooner popped his Royal head under the water when a band of music concealed in a neighbouring machine started up 'God Save Great George, our King.'"

On the following Tuesday, the *Gazette* contained a brief notice of the event. The King, it announced, "since he bathed has found his health considerably improved."

The improvement in the King's health was



away. In the distance, to the right, lies Weymouth. Worlds of contrast . . . Weymouth, austere and independent, still looking with suspicion at "foreigners" from England



Right on the top of Chesil Bank, open to the fury of wind and storm, is the Old Cove Inn, where landlady Mrs. Doris Saunders presides over the drinks



Frank Hinde, a quarryman, and his daughter examine the fossils which give Portland stone its durability

nothing to the improvement in Weymouth's. From being a sleepy little port on the smuggler's coast, Weymouth suddenly blossomed into a fashionable watering place which was to play a leading part in the British discovery of the Seaside.

Weymouth citizens are not ungrateful. In 1802, on the fiftieth anniversary of the King's accession, a public dinner having been adjudged "ill-adapted to the Awful Times in which we live"—you can read the whole story at length on the back of the plinth—they duly commissioned the royal statue, and placed it in a commanding position at the end of the promenade, "a Memorial to Future Ages to the Virtues of the Monarch."

The statue is a main bus-stop now; and, to this day—perhaps because Weymouth is in Dorset, and only six miles from Dorchester over the hill—"Farmer George's" solid, homely mark remains much more clearly visible upon the town than that of his more celebrated, raffish son, the Prince Regent, on big, modern, London-dominated, chromium-plated Brighton.

Out of season at least, the King, it almost seems, might descend from his plinth even now, and take one of his strolls without—if he escaped

being knocked down by a motor-car—finding too much amiss.

He would feel at home, walking along the promenade with its solid line of Georgian terraces, now boarding houses and small hotels; he would know his way, also, about the close network of narrow streets, with odd little bow-windowed shops, crowded between the seafront and the River Wey; and the riverside quays themselves have somehow a period air, with their old warehouses and the harbour-master's office and the small sailing boats and the big white-painted paddle-steamers awaiting their loads of trippers, their sonorous names circling the white paddlewheel casings . . . The Consul . . . The Embassy . . . The Emperor of India.

Quiet Flows The Riverside

These days, it is true, there are naval tenders, too, and the British Railways Channel Islands steamers. But these newcomers hardly disturb the quiet-flowing life, the Georgian leisureliness of the Weymouth riverside.

In search of the pre-Seaside, pre-George III Weymouth, I crossed the bridge over the river, and climbed the long steep hill at the other side, to where the old church of Wyke Regis thrusts

up the grey stone tower that for four centuries has been a familiar landmark to sailors off this Dorset coast. The tower rises from a forest of gravestones. The church has not merely one churchyard, but three—all of considerable size.

In part, I knew, this was because it was the Mother Church of Weymouth; in part, it was, I had heard, a rather lurid testimony to the perils of the Chesil Beach that runs below. It is not for nothing, it seems, that they call these waters "Dead Man's Bay."

I wandered into the churchyard underneath the tower, trying to decipher the inscriptions on the dark, rain-worn gravestones. But the stones were many and the inscriptions hidden by lichen. I could find nothing.

The church door opened and a man came out. "The men from the wrecks," I asked him. "Where are they buried?"

He took me over to the graves of the men from the Abergavenny, a fine East Indiaman, commanded by William Wordsworth's brother, John. There were 180 people clinging to the yards when the Abergavenny went down in 1805, with a loss of 247 lives.

Then we went over to the church tower, and



The statue of George III erected by "the grateful inhabitants" of Weymouth. The town became a fashionable resort after the King went sea-bathing there. Now his statue is a main bus stop

my friend pointed to a tablet, let into the side:

*To Record the Melancholy Wreck
Of the Ship Alexander
Bound for London, from Bombay
... all her crew and passengers consisting
of more than 140 souls unhappily perished,
with the exception of five lascars. ...
We stood there, reading the verse below:
Lamented Shades! Was Yours Alas to Drain
Misfortune's Bitter Chalice? ...*

It was a long composition. "Come over here a minute," said my friend, who turned out to be a local schoolmaster. "There's a queer bit of twisted morality here."

Killed By The Pygmy Schooner

He led me to a gravestone nearer the outer wall. On it was carved a spirited composition representing an encounter between two ships in full sail. My friend ran a finger over the inscription beneath:

*Sacred to the Memory of
WILLIAM LEWIS
Who Was Killed by a Shot
from the Pygmy Schooner
on 21 April, 1822, Aged 88 Years*

"A smuggler, of course," said the schoolmaster. "The Pygmy Schooner was the revenue cutter. But here's the really interesting bit . . . if you can make it out."

He pointed to the verse below. "God Shall Sure Avenge My Fate!" quoted the schoolmaster, his finger brushing the moss off a line in the middle. "Magnificent, isn't it, eh?"

As I climbed the long hill to Wyke Regis—now, in effect, a suburb of Weymouth—there

came into view, jutting out into the sea below, the strange shape of the Isle of Portland, a half-submerged crocodile, lying there heavily in the sea, tethered tenuously to the mainland by a curving isthmus.

Not an enchanting isle; yet it exerts a strange pull. The mere shape of it is haunting. It sets one's imagination to work. "The Isle of Slingers" was Thomas Hardy's name for it. That seemed to strike just about the right bleak, inhospitable, faintly sinister note.

It was with quickened interest that I followed the signpost marked "Portland," driving down the long, rather dreary road that runs continually downhill till it reaches the water's edge.

Once past the Whitehead Torpedo Works, and over the ferry bridge, all buildings disappeared. The road became a flat grey ribbon, a causeway, stretching out towards the dark hull of the island. Looking to the left, one saw the long grey shapes of aircraft carriers and cruisers dotted about the great sweep of Portland Harbour. To the right there was the unchanging yellow-brown wall of Chesil Beach, which, turning out from the coast here, runs steadily alongside the road till it joins the island.

But few drivers glanced out of their windows—they were driving too fast: inevitably, the empty causeway becomes something of a speed-track.

I stopped and cautiously crossed the road to plough up the pebble slope to the top of Chesil Bank. My eye had long ago been captured by that long streak on the map, along the Dorset coast. I was curious about this strange natural breakwater, fifty feet high, nine and a half miles long, composed of countless millions of rounded pebbles. Many learned authorities

have elaborated complicated theories to explain this strange formation. Yet speculation remains.

Leaning against the wind, I breasted the ridge and came down on to the seaward slope. It was hard going on the pebbles, which here are about three inches across, the size of new potatoes.

That is one of the oddities of the bank: the pebbles along it are "sorted" for size, getting gradually smaller as you move west. The story goes that the local fishermen, lost in a fog, can fix their exact position by coming into the bank and taking a look at the pebbles.

A sombre line of oil tanks marks the last half-mile of the causeway. And then the island starts, rather nondescriptly, with a railway station, a bus-stop where people are waiting, and a straggling street of grey cottages, built from great blocks of stone, which also seems to be waiting, rather hopelessly, for something that never comes.

Road Corkscrews Up The Rock

Almost immediately, one is climbing, ascending steeply and steadily as if on a mountain railway—for the craggy snout of the Portland crocodile, which from this angle looks more like the head of a whale, faces landward. And everything, the grey stone streets of Chesilton, the new pink-and-white housing estate, the shopping centre of Fortuneswell, the urban district council offices, hangs on the rock-side, and every man's feet are planted on the shoulders of his neighbour. "The Gibraltar of Wessex" was another of Hardy's phrases. That, too, seems a just one.

Cars and lorries went grinding up through the narrow streets, hugging the road as it corkscrewed up the rock. Cars and lorries came twisting slowly down, nosing round the bends. At the first impact, it was rather like walking into a cinema from the side, and catching sight of the screen from an extreme angle. To the right of the road, as it climbed, the ground fell away sharply to the beach below. And what one saw, glancing over that side, took one's breath away.

At the top of the island at last, beside the war memorial obelisk there, I was able to stop and absorb this strange and wonderful view.

Far below, the long, curious yellow-brown ridge of Chesil Beach curved away from the island, running off into the distance. Behind the Beach gleamed the long, jagged mirrors of the East and West Fleet, the twin lagoons which the bank encloses on its landward side before—somewhere near the horizon—it joins up with the land again.

Languor Of A Remote World

Four hundred feet below, the long curving line of white foam surged and retreated. It had the languor of another, a remote, world. Yet, even at this height, there came through a sound as of several railway engines letting off steam. Countless millions of pebbles, sucked back into the undertow, hurled forward again, sucked back and hurled forward, grinding and roaring, all through the day and all through the night. The Beach is never still.

No human movement broke the spell. This is a solitary shore, abandoned to the waves and the seabirds—and the swans, which for more than five hundred years have been making their way here from all over Northern Europe, to cover the landward bank at the end of the West Fleet with their crowding nests, to feed on the zostera grass that flourishes on the fringes of this lonely lagoon.

Somewhere down there, on the top of the bank—sometimes covered by pebbles, sometimes sticking above them—was a boundary stone. On the far side of that stone lay the Manor of Abbotsbury, the lovely village of thatch and old stone with the lane that leads down from its main street to Lord Ilchester's famous Swannery, visited by 30,000 people every summer. On the near side of the boundary stone



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Jim hadn't offered to wash up for years. I'm not suspicious by nature, but when my husband suddenly goes all gallant I begin to get worried. I phoned Jim's sister, Pam.



"I just can't understand my brother," said Pam. "Always makes an excuse when we ask him to bring you round, and I know how you enjoy a game of canasta. Anyone would think he was ashamed of you!"



"Ashamed" I said to myself... and I suddenly remembered the last time we played cards. Jim, perhaps not intentionally, kept looking at my rough hands and admired the smooth whiteness of Pam's.



Yes, Pam had mentioned NIVEA... I should have taken her tip then instead of waiting for Jim's "hint." But all's well that ends well. Now he's really the proud fond husband, and I could show my NIVEA-smooth hands anywhere.



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began the "Island and Royal Manor of Portland," which thereby took in three and a half miles or so of Chesil Beach—a fact duly made clear to all on Ascension Day every seven years, when the Reeve of Portland and a party of Portlanders would row across the Fleet to "beat the bounds" on Chesil Bank with all proper ceremony.

And this, I came to realize, after a few days on the island, was—even in 1954—far from being a merely empty gesture.

Quarries Everywhere

From its whale's-head top—490 feet above the sea at its highest point, the Verne Citadel—the island slopes gently backwards, to sink into the sea again, three miles away at Portland Bill. And everywhere now, along the road, off the road, on the horizon, everywhere there were quarries, great yawning chasms, new quarries where stone face was still light-coloured, old quarries, long ago abandoned, heaped with great, dark, unwanted hunks of stone, like the wreckage of lost worlds.

Here, Sir Christopher Wren—M.P. for Weymouth, incidentally—dug the stone to build St. Paul's and remake London after the Great Fire. The city masons learned their craft on this stone which—weathered by the city's vapours, darkened by the city's smoke, washed by the city's rain—has done so much to give London its own peculiar wintry beauty.

Nearly three hundred years later, Portland stone is still rebuilding London—and a good many other cities, too, both at home and abroad. And looks as if it may well go on for another three hundred years. For this island, four and a half miles long and two miles wide, is one solid hunk of limestone.

The road, descending gently, became the main street of Easton, the strange, grey little town in the dead middle of the island, surrounded by quarries as a wheel-hub by spokes.

And in Easton, one knew at last that one was on an island, a strange island, for the look of the place was like nothing I had seen anywhere before: a wide, clean street, open to the sky, the long line of cottages on each side, high and narrow and built, like castles, from great blocks of Portland stone.

Occasionally, at the front or the side of a house, there would be a casual display of enormous fossils—a petrified tree trunk, or a huge white stone whorl of a shell, or a bone from a pliosaurus backbone, the size of a plate. And then, unexpectedly, at the foot of the long street's slope, an elegant bandstand, set in a small railed garden, where the old men can sit on seats in the sun.

Rabbit Superstition

I went down the main street of Easton, looking for a butcher's shop. I had a small inquiry to make. I selected a small white-fronted shop with "K. Davis" under the window. K. Davis, in a white coat, was mincing meat, piling it into an enamel tray.

"Is it true," I asked him, "that Portland people, when they want to buy rabbit, never ask for rabbit, always for 'bunnies'?"

The butcher smiled. "Some do; some don't bother any more. Those old things are dying out, bit by bit."

It is a superstition well grounded in reason. For a sudden scurrying of rabbits once meant one thing to a Portland quarryman: that a place was dangerous, that rock was about to fall. If he heard the mere word "rabbits," on his way to work, he would turn round and go home. And no one on Portland would have tempted Providence by calling rabbits by their name, even at the butcher's.

As one stood there in the main street, the place seemed to have an almost metropolitan solidity. And yet, as the map showed me, less than three-quarters of a mile away, on each side, the island broke off and fell into the sea. Beyond the bandstand, the road to the Bill veered right, through the connected hamlet of Wakeham, another long street of these small cottages, incongruously constructed from these great blocks of stone. And

then, at the end of the street, I took the narrow lane that goes twisting down, past the towering ruin of the "Bow-and-Arrow castle," with its seven foot wide Norman walls, steeply down, through the ancient debris of quarries, down to the narrow strip of sand of Church Ope Cove.

The coast here, under the much quarried cliffs, strewn with boulders and great blocks of discarded quarry stone, overgrown with fern and bramble, has a wild, un-English beauty.

I wandered through this wilderness, along the network of "smugglers' paths," stopping every few yards to examine abandoned heaps of stone blocks.

On Portland, "smugglers' paths" is no mere romanticism. A strong sideline along the Dorset coast, on Portland the outwitting of the Revenue seems to have reached the proportions of a staple industry. The island is still full of the big green Flemish glass brandy flasks, handily shaped for carrying on donkeys' backs. And at the little cottage museum may be seen another important bit of equipment—a metal frame, forming a miniature movable lighthouse, also suitable for strapping on a donkey's back.

"Of course, we always did our best to get the crew safely off," explained a Portlander, quietly.

Rope Had Vanished

There was, indeed, a strong sporting spirit about the whole thing, a good moral tone. It was "Portlanders versus The Rest"—and it was, of course, well known that "kimberlins" (non-islanders) were always fair game.

Modern conditions sadly curtail these traditional pursuits; but, even now, there is the odd occasion which brings the old gleam into the Portlander's eye. Some time ago, a company of Royal Engineers, engaged on a cliff-climbing exercise, left their three hundred foot coil of rope on the cliff top and moved a little way off for their midday break. When the troops got back, not many minutes later, every foot of rope had unaccountably disappeared.

Six miles off the coast, the Shambles Lightship bobs in the waves. High above, on the cliff top, rise the oblong grey chimney stacks of the old convict prison. The convicts have gone and brown-suited Borstal boys have taken their places, but those old lags have certainly left their mark on Portland.

Brought to the island for that purpose, in 1848, in their broad arrows and chains, they had built the great encircling breakwater which made Portland Harbour the main base of the Channel Fleet. It took them more than twenty years: the Prince Consort laid the foundation stone—dropped with a splash into the water—and Edward VII, as Prince of Wales, declared the structure completed.

Then, cheek-by-jowl with the jail itself, there is the romanesque church of St. Peter-in-the-Grove, a solid Portland stone structure—a "monument," as the guidebook smugly puts it, "to the better nature and skill of our criminal class." Thousands of tourists still thrill pleasurably every year before the handsome stone pulpit, "carved by Irish Fenians," wonder at the font and lectern, "the work of Whitechapel thieves."

A Victorian Mystery

But the ultimate spine-chilling moment comes with the mosaic in the chancel, laid by the celebrated Constance Kent, whose battering to death of her child step-brother provided—until she finally confessed—one of the most lurid and long-drawn mysteries of the late Victorian period.

Despite these devoted labours, the church remains a curiously cold thing—a mausoleum of hope.

Beyond the prison is the Verne Citadel, a truly formidable structure, cut deep into the rock, with an encircling moat like a chasm. During the war the Verne had a military garrison, manning the batteries within, which command the sea on all sides. Now, across the drawbridge over the chasm, the doors opening into the



rock were flanked by one of the neat green signboards of the Prison Commissioners, stating the statutory penalties for all who supply food or otherwise succour prisoners. Since 1949, the Citadel has been a Prison Training Centre for first offenders.

Heavy lorries crept about the narrow back roads of the island, bearing on their backs great blocks of stone. From far below, came the stutter and roar of pneumatic drills—sharp reminder that the real story of Portland is the story of its stone.

Fossils In Stone

In the first quarry, men were breaking up great hunks of the roach stratum—the topmost layer of the Portland beds—into small chips, called "spalls," to be used for roadstone or ground up for agricultural lime.

The spalls were of a coarse whitish-grey rock.

"Full of shells," said one of the men. He broke a piece, and half a dozen large white fossil "cockles" fell out. He handed me a couple. The overburden, it seems, is crammed with these fossil bi-valves, which the quarrymen know as "horses' heads." The bottom of the sea was set in that stone—like prawns in aspic.

It is the shell, indeed, that is the secret of the famed durability of Portland stone—even in the corrosive acid air of London. "The more shell, the better it'll weather," the quarrymen will tell you. For this reason, fine roach, the shelliest stratum, was used in the new Waterloo Bridge. The shell hardens in the stone, and, as the surface is worn back a little, forms a projecting shield, a sort of armour-plating, which saves the rest of the stone from the elements.

I found them free and easy, these Portland quarrymen, mostly big fellows, with an air of independence. They make good money; even with weather stoppages, their piece rates put them in the very top class of Britain's industrial workers.

Frank Hinde, the quarryman who

had shown me the shells, comes from Southwell, the last hamlet on the island before it disappears into the sea at the Bill.

Southwell is a Portland joke. It was supposed to be the last refuge of your real old smuggling-wrecking, dyed-in-the-wool Portlander. All the money in the island slipped down to there, the Portlanders said, then stuck. And then they would tell you about the old quarryman who used to come to work every day bringing all his money with him, all in gold sovereigns, in a biscuit tin.

Quarrying is in the men's blood—in the old days each quarry gang was generally one family; and still many a man has a quarrying ancestry that goes back to the men who dug the stone for St. Paul's.

Frank Hinde's father and grandfather had worked in the quarries. So had George Stone's, an older man I spoke to in the next quarry. "But now that fellow," he said, pointing to another quarryman, "he's a kimberlin, he is." John Brown was born on the island, but his family had come from "over the water." If he goes on living in Portland until he is ninety, he will still be just a "kimberlin."

The False Front

Proud men these Portlanders might well be. For each of them can echo Wren's famous epitaph: "If you require our monument, look around you." Nearly every town in Britain shows their mark. From the rock of Portland were hewn the civic centres of Birmingham and Cardiff and Southampton, the city hall of Belfast, the town hall of Colchester, the municipal buildings of Ipswich, the police headquarters of Leicester. . . .

And yet the truth seems to be that the great days of Portland stone are over. Its virtues are durability and simplicity, and this, perhaps, is neither a particularly durable nor a simple age. It has become a rare thing for a building to be constructed from whole blocks of stone. Portland stone has become a false front—a cosmetic

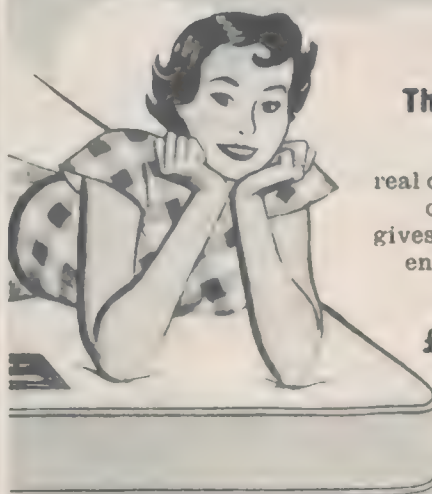
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facing hung on steel frames or stuck on to bricks.

And, crowning irony, artificial Portland stone, made from real Portland stone, is now being manufactured on the island. "I expect pretty soon they'll be spraying it on," growled an old Portlander disgustedly.

Whereas in 1903 the island sent out 100,000 tons of stone, by 1952 the total was down to 60,000 tons. To fill the gap, the island's two big stone firms have got together, with some success, to expand the export trade. The spectacular United Nations building, that great slab towering over New York's East River, is faced in Portland stone. Stone has been shipped to Holland and Belgium. It lends dignity to British war cemeteries from Spitzbergen to the Celebes.

Extraordinary that this small, obscure island, hanging from stormy Chesil Beach into the English Channel, should thus have perpetuated itself, not only all over Britain, but over a large part of the world!

In the office of Walter Sansom, manager of the Bath and Portland Stone Firms, Ltd., my eye was caught by a large map on the wall. It was covered with a network of parallel lines dividing the land into many hundreds of long, narrow, numbered strips.

It was labelled "Tithe Map of the Island of Portland." The small strips were plots or "lawns" to whose owners the quarry firms would pay a royalty of two shillings a ton on stone mined from their "lawn."

"There are 2,447 lawns on the top of the island," explained Sansom. "They're in the Domesday Book, you know. . . ."

Portlander's Bible

Portlanders have never held with "law reform." They have always firmly believed that "what was good enough for William the Conqueror is good enough for me." Until 1926, if a Portlander died intestate, which he very often did, his land was inherited equally by his children in "undivided shares." Each would thus become owner of a hypothetical fraction of a "lawn," and when each in turn died, their children became possessed of a fraction of that fraction. It is on these involved and extremely fractional fractions that the quarry firms must gauge their royalty payments.

Chuckling with the traditional islander's glee at a mere kimberlin's bewilderment, Sansom produced a large battered book.

"Now this," he said, "is the Portlander's Bible." He pointed to the title, "Terrier of the Lands, Etc., at Portland." He turned the pages, showing me the details of ownership of the "lawns." They looked like the ravings of an insane arithmetician.

"Now here you see . . . J. Pearce . . . 2/5ths and 1/7th of 1/5th of 1/4th acre . . . that's a fairly simple one . . . and here's my wife . . . you see she has 61/72nds plus 1/384th of a Weare. . . ."

I waved a hand helplessly.

"Of course, besides the royalty on the stone dug, we have to pay two-pence a ton to the owner of every bit of land the stone lorry crosses on its way out with the stone. Even if the wheel only crosses the merest corner . . . Yes, might be as many as forty claimants all right. . . ."

I shook my head, dazed. "But surely, you can't possibly. . . ."

"Oh, well, we manage to work it

out somehow, you know. After all, we've been doing it some time. And though there are 15,000 people on Portland, we still haven't a single solicitor's office. Until recently there were no regular deeds for any property on Portland. If they wanted to buy or sell a house or something, the parties just met in church and signed a transfer before witnesses. . . ."

These days, Portlanders have weakened so far as to allow on the island a thing called the Urban District Council, which has offices in Fortuneswell. This body, none the less, retains a strong "kimberlin" taint. It is apt to become hopelessly entangled in simple questions of ownership. And, on many parts of the island, it cannot lay down a footpath or so much as erect a lamp-post without getting the permission of—and probably making a payment to—the Court Leet.

Court Still Meets

Elsewhere in England, courts leet are something you look for only in textbooks on feudal institutions. But on Portland, the Court Leet still meets every November in the old George Inn at Reforne, and thereupon proceeds to put in their proper places all such upstart bodies as Her Majesty's Post Office or the Royal Navy.

The court has twenty-four jurymen. Its Foreman, Chief Constable, late Reeve, Chief Trustee of the Royal Grant Fund, and mighty scourge of encroaching kimberlins is an old gentleman named John Pearce, who lives in a small castellated house which, with its double front doors and garden display of fossils, strikes a distinctive note in Wakeham's long stone street.

The Pearces are the oldest family on the island, and—on Portland—that is an almost frightening claim.

And what was the court's main concern? I asked him.

"Encroachments!" said the old man, fixing me with a sharp eye. "Encroachments on the common land. We're sticklers for our rights here."

The common land embraces a good deal of the island, the Bill, the verges between roads and cliffs, Chesil Beach and so on. Did the Post Office wish to erect a telegraph pole? Let them make all proper representations to the Court Leet. Did the government wish to lay a pipeline along Chesil Beach? The charge would be so much a year. They must pay their dues as encroachers have been made to do since the Norman Conquest.

A King's Gratitude

On this common land, Pearce explained, the soil is the Queen's but the herbage the tenants'. When stone was quarried from it, Crown and Court Leet split the royalties. Until the Restoration, they had split them fifty-fifty. Then, in gratitude for the fight the Portlanders had put up for the Royal cause during the Civil Wars, Charles II announced that he would take only threepence in the shilling, leaving the islanders ninepence.

Three centuries later, Portlanders still benefit by this Royal gesture.

"When the late King died," explained John Pearce, "I, as Chief Constable, wrote a letter to Queen Elizabeth, as we have written to every new sovereign since Charles II, asking her if she was willing to continue the ninepenny grant."

The money goes into the island's "Royal Grant Fund," which at one

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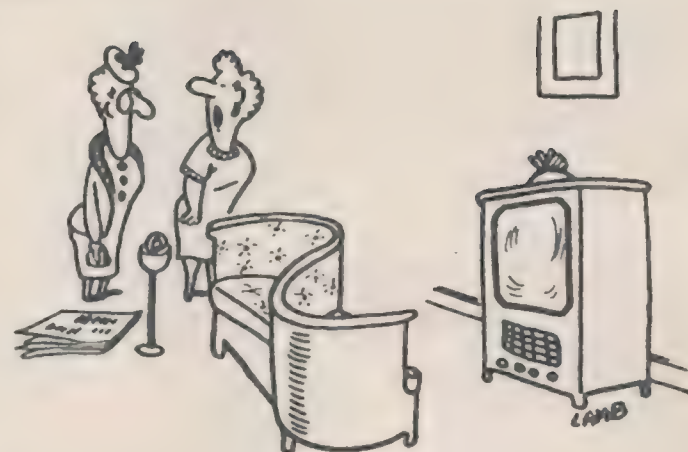
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"George never watches TV"

time assisted its schools, and even paid island emigrants' passages to Australia. But today, with the welfare state in being, it seems that no one can think what to do with the money.

To the King, Portlanders used to pay quit-rents—threepence an acre, one penny a house, and so on. All this meant that in consideration of the total sum of £14 14s. 3d. rent handed over from the island to the King, Portlanders were "quit" of any obligation to send armed men to the Crusades.

Then, in the twenties, after paying over this £14 14s. 3d. annually for centuries, the Portlanders were told that henceforth their quit-rents would be commuted for one lump sum payment for all time.

John Pearce, telling me this, stroked his chin thoughtfully. "It's a moot point whether Portlanders are liable to be called up for National Service at all," he said. "A moot point. We've paid our quit-rent. . . ."

Attacked Newlyweds

For just a moment, the old light of battle gleamed in the eyes of the Foreman of the Portland Court Leet. But the sad truth was too plain.

"Oh, it's all entirely different now. The fact is: the old Portlanders are getting fewer and fewer. Why, in the old days they never went off the island, and, you know, when the first Portland married a kimberlin, they stoned 'em! They picked up the pebbles on Chesil Beach and stoned 'em coming over. I remember an old fellow saying to me, 'I've never known anybody any good as came from over the water.'"

I drove on south, towards the Bill, down the road to Southwell. There was the odd patch of grass now, struggling in this stony waste.

Soon, I was held up by a young farmer—there are four farmers on the island—driving a herd of neat Guernsey cows across the road. I hailed him. "What's the soil like on the island? Pretty poor?"

"No," he said. "There's a full six inches and it's got no deficiencies at all. I had it analysed. . . ."

The tone of his voice was unmistakably Lancashire. What on earth was a Lancashire lad doing, driving cows on this remote Channel rock?

It is a refreshing tale. Before the war, Henry Booth—the young man with the cows—was running a news-agent's shop in Garstang, near Preston. It was the family business, but his heart was not in it. Then, called up to the army during the war, he was posted to Portland. He took a fancy to the island, rejoicing in the freedom of the sea and the sky.

He rented sixty acres of the island. He bought a house on it. He took over a herd of cows.

When I met him, with two corn crops safely harvested and the milk going off daily to Dorchester, it seemed fairly clear that one more kimberlin had come to Portland to stay.

Henry Booth went off after his straying cows, and I resumed my journey towards the Bill. Beyond the

Avalanche Church at Southwell—erected in memory of the captain, passengers and crew of the *Avalanche*, which went down here in 1877—the land begins to dip more noticeably, and then there is a magic moment when the whole tail of the island comes into view, dark against the glimmering sea.

Soon, the island dips again, and there is nothing but that long, low, rocky promontory, running into the sea, with the lighthouse keepers' ponderous flat-roofed quarters, and the lighthouse itself, almost gay in its red and white bands.

Just a little way out, beyond the Bill, I saw a patch of sea that continually boiled and frothed: the Portland Race—that turbulent meeting place of the Channel tides, so much dreaded in the days of sail. . . .

It was dusk when I returned to the place where Chesil Beach curves gently round to join the island. A biting wind swooped over the ridge. And there, right on the top, open to all the fury of the storm, was a little pub. The "Old Cove Inn."

I pushed open the door, and found myself in a small, low-roofed bar. Outside, the beach roared and ground. But it did not disturb the landlady, Mrs. Doris Saunders. "You don't notice it after a while," she said.

The pub, descending in the female line, has been in her family for close on two centuries. On the walls of the bars are yellowing photographs—pictures of wrecks, of the many ships which have been cast up, just outside the door, on this cruel Chesil Beach.

When I left the cosy little bar and again stood on the ridge, I took another look towards Portland.

How many worlds that barren rock contains! There is the summer visitors' Portland and the Trinity House Portland, the Portland of the quarry men, the Portland of the Borstal boys, the Portland of the first offenders.

Breakfast At 5.30

And, most of all perhaps, the Portland of its own, tucked snugly away under the towering east cliff of the island, in Castletown, with its red blocks of naval canteens and naval hospitals and naval laundries, with its Naafi depot and its hurrying young men in dark raincoats or silver-buttoned blazers, its Salvation Army home and the "naval branch" of Harvey's Bristol Sherry, its naval outfitters' shops, its "Jolly Sailor" and "Sailors' Return," and the hotel with the notice outside that reads: "5.30-7.30 a.m. breakfasts for Naval Personnel Returning from Leave."

And I thought of old John Pearce, the Foreman of the Court Leet, growling: "If the old Portlanders had had their way, not one of 'em would ever have been allowed to set foot on the island. . . ." For this was encroachment, indeed!

THE END

Another article in the series "Journey Into Britain," by Harry Hopkins, will appear soon



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Consider your verdict

by

RUSSELL SCOTT, LL.B.



MR. SPARK took great pains with his garden. In it he had planted some rare shrubs and a small orchard; on the lawn he had a summer house which was collapsible and taken down in the winter.

Eventually, he sold his cottage and land to Mr. Well. After he had signed the agreement, at a price of £3,000, Spark removed some of the shrubs, picked a lot of the fruit and dismantled the summer house to take it away.

Well arrived on the scene in the middle of these operations. He objected to Spark removing the things from the garden, claiming that they were now his as they formed part of the property. Spark, he said, should either ask him for them, or deduct their value from the price of the property.

"Nonsense," said Spark, and

he continued to gather the fruit.

Well sued him for the value of the shrubs, fruit and summer house, and told the judge: "Whatever is growing on land, or is attached to it, becomes part of the property. The contract to buy the house and land included everything growing in Spark's garden, as well as all out-houses.

"The things that he has removed reduce the value of the property, and therefore he must pay me for them."

"I don't agree," argued Spark. "I planted those shrubs as a luxury for my own enjoyment, and I grew the fruit myself. As for the summer house, it was collapsible and only rested on the lawn. I have taken nothing more than the rewards of my own industry, and it is most unfair to expect me to pay for them."

What is your verdict? For the legal position, turn to page 42

THE GENERAL COMES HOME

Continued from page 25

you meant it, sir. . . . Imagine you're tickling your young lady, Mr. Claire-Cavan, sir."

Suddenly he realized the enemy had surrendered. He was on the ground, moaning, his hands clasping his face. "You've broken my jaw, you old —!"

The years had magically fallen from Major-General Claire-Cavan. It might have been Captain Claire-Cavan in his hey-day who thundered: "Get up, or I'll puncture your guts."

The enemy rose and stood, swaying. "Walk ahead of me. Any nonsense and you'll get a jab in the kidneys."

His blood was up. He knew where he'd take his prisoner. The Old Brigade was marching on the Snort—and, by heaven, it was marching with its colours flying!

Grimly, he marched his prisoner at the point of the umbrella up the cindered path, through the side-entrance and round to the front. At the round-eyed doorman he fired a salvo that made the windows rattle:

"Don't stand gaping there. Give Major-General Claire-Cavan's compliments to the officers in the bar and tell them he wants them here at the double. At the double, I said!"

The bugle-blast had been heard

through the open window, and they came—at the double. When they saw the tableau, they stopped.

As a subaltern in his distant youth, Major-General Claire-Cavan had been dressed-down by fierce-faced senior officers who had seen the flash of Matebele spears and heard the stamp of Zulu impis. Now his voice passed on the thunder of those voices.

"Look here, gentlemen, this simply isn't good enough! I came to London for a quiet holiday, not to go chasing your deserters while a pack of wooden-legged washerwomen are drinking beer. If you fellows haven't learned how to look after your own men, it's dashed well time you. . . ."

He concluded with: "And now, gentlemen, you can break off—if you know how. And I suggest some of you get your hair permed."

He'd finished. He lowered his umbrella, wondering rather bleakly how the Army Council would react if these fellows lodged a complaint.

He needn't have worried. Without knowing how he got there, Major-General Claire-Cavan suddenly found himself in the bar surrounded by the New Army.

It was at his fourth brandy that the warming thought came to him. New Army be damned—it was just the same old mob. He'd come home to rejoin his comrades.

THE END

SHOOT FIRST!*Continued from page 15*

cameraman, which had taken me to most countries in the world and to more battle fronts than I care to think of.

"You'll never be a cameraman—you've got no imagination!" the bald-headed man shouted as he held my expenses sheet aloft.

One of the others, crouching over the billiard table, potted the black ball and said: "If he had an imagination he wouldn't want to be a cameraman."

It was smoky in the billiard room, and the cameramen of Universal News were passing the time away with a game of snooker. They abandoned the game to inspect my first expenses sheet which, for some reason unknown to myself, displeased them.

One of them read it aloud, line by line—there were only three. "Bus fare to Hammersmith, ninepence; bus fare from Hammersmith, ninepence; bus fare from Piccadilly to Oxford Street twopence. Total—one shilling and eightpence. Cameraman? Oh, my God!"

Inwardly I agreed with the last part of his remark, for I had just returned from my first assignment as a newsreel cameraman, and I knew before I saw my exposed film that I had flopped. Yet only three days before, when I had applied for the job, I had claimed to be a first-class newsreel cameraman.

Spinning The Tale

In fact, my experience with film cameras had been little. My first job was as junior clerk in the offices of National Screen Services, Ltd. From this position I had graduated to animation cameraman, and was responsible for producing trick effects for "Coming Next Week" trailers at local cinemas and for such exotic announcements as "Ices will be served during the Interval."

It was hardly newsreel work, but I had not let that stand in my way when I applied for the job with Universal News. As I sat telling the tale of my great experiences in the film world to a smart young executive, I felt sure that I was making an impression. However, he cut me short with a wave. "Two pounds a week," he said, assessing my true value.

A few days later he sent me on my first assignment. My task was to film the Boat Race from Hammersmith Bridge. I was to film the university boats coming towards me and shooting the bridge; then I was to run over the bridge in time to get a shot of the boats coming out from under the other side. It sounded simple.

I arrived at Hammersmith Bridge four hours before the race; the traffic was pouring across in both directions. I spent the next four hours practising: point the camera towards Putney, hold it, stop shooting. Turn round, run to the other side, remember to wind the camera spring as I run. Point the camera down at the water, tilt it up to Chiswick!

Policeman Was Puzzled

I kept rushing from one side to the other through the traffic, climbing over the suspension girder work. Soon the crowd began to gather. A policeman stood there completely puzzled by my behaviour, and watched me closely, while the public shook their heads in sympathy. I needed it, for by the time the race started I was on my knees.

The race came and went, and I had grave doubts about the pictures I had taken. On the way back to Wardour Street, I gloomily pictured myself signing on at the Labour Exchange on the Monday. . . . And now, while waiting for the film to come back from the laboratories, the other cameramen were ribbing me about my expenses account.

I was saved from further persecution by the office boy, who with reverence in his voice asked the cameramen to come to the theatre, a miniature cinema used for viewing the "rushes."

Inside the theatre my new boss sat

importantly in a tip-up seat, and a number of people unknown to me sat grimly waiting for the show to start. As soon as we were inside, the lights went out, the projector started up, and there on the small screen the first shots of the Boat Race appeared. The pictures were brilliant.

The boats' crews came out of the boathouses on the reach at Putney, and carried the slim craft down to the waterside. The crowds cheered. We watched them in crystal-clear close-ups waving their hands and favours. The boats were put in the water, the starter raised his flag and the boats shot away towards Hammersmith Bridge.

We, the audience, seemed to be in the Oxford boat, getting a cox's eye-view. Every expression of the rowers' faces was clear to see, then the camera slowly panned across and we were in the Cambridge boat. I felt a movement of approval from the Boss as he moved in his seat.

Fall Of An "Ace"

Then the screen blinked and we were looking at a fog—a thick London pea-souper. We all leaned forward, trying to penetrate the mist. Then, in the top right-hand corner of the screen, I saw a spiderlike object moving its legs, and then another just beside it.

"Who shot this?" a disgusted voice demanded.

I tried to speak, but the words wouldn't come, my mouth was dry. The spiders wriggled some more, then the whole screen somersaulted. For a brief moment, we were looking right down into a boat, and then it was gone. . . . once more we looked into the London fog and saw two spiders crawling away into obscurity. As the next shot flashed on the screen, a voice said: "That was Noble's. The new ace cameraman!"

Everybody laughed. I shrank back into my seat. I knew it. . . . the sack! They had soon found out that I knew nothing about newsreel cameras.

A few minutes later the Boss called me to his office. "Sit down," he said. "Congratulations! You did well. That was a tough job I gave you."

I was speechless.

"You did well to get that one shot looking down into the boat," he continued. "Now, give me your expenses."

I gave him the creased paper that had offended the other "aces." He looked them over for a while, then smiled rather kindly. "If I passed those, I wouldn't have a cameraman on my staff by the end of the week. You've got a lot to learn."

"I Want A Story"

Then he gave me my first lesson in newsreel work. "When you go on an assignment, you must tell a story. Use your camera as a pen. I don't want a single shot of a boat coming and a boat going. I want a story. I want to see where you are—so show me Hammersmith Bridge. I want to know what time the competing crews reach the bridge, so give me a shot of the clock. What happened when the boats had gone past? The people went home. Right, let me have a shot of them going home. I want a story. And that goes for your expenses sheet, too!"

An hour later he passed my expenses sheet thus:

Taxi to Hammersmith Bridge	5s. 6d.
Gratuity to bystander for help with equipment	3s. 0d.
Breakfast and Lunch	7s. 0d.
Programme	6d.
Taxi from Hammersmith to Wardour Street	7s. 0d.
Cost of cleaning suit, soiled climbing bridge	3s. 6d.

£1 6s. 6d.

I went home with twenty-six shillings and sixpence in my pocket, a job, and a strong conviction that the film industry was mad. I little knew then that within a few months I should be the youngest British war correspondent with the British Expeditionary Force in France, using the same camera that I had used on the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race.

They gave me a war correspondent's licence, I bought an officer's uniform, then went off to the war in France. It

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You have only one pair of eyes to last your lifetime. They are almost as precious to you as life itself, and yet this winter how harshly they will be treated! Long hours of artificial light, and exposure to grimy, foggy atmospheres will tax and strain them; you will try to read in jerking trains and buses, and continue to use them when they are tired, or inflamed by a cold or a touch of 'flu.

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was October, 1939. I took no pleasure in being the youngest war correspondent at the age of twenty-three (much younger were to come out later). I would have had five years for some real experience, I felt so raw.

I left my electric razor behind in England. "Won't be able to use it in the trenches," was the line I shot my envious friends—and then I lived in a luxury French hotel for six months. Never was there an easier job than war correspondent, I thought.

In May, 1940, I took leave in Paris, after sending an informative cable to my London office that nothing important was likely to happen for at least a month. On the second morning of my leave, May 10, I awoke, took coffee in bed and read the headlines. There in big black letters it screamed at me: "GERMANS INVADE THE LOWLANDS. ALLIES ADVANCE INTO BELGIUM."

And there was I, two hundred miles away from the story I'd been waiting seven months to cover!

Quickly dressing, I put on a raincoat which hid my shoulder flashes, took a taxi to Le Bourget Airport and went into the bar. I spotted a French pilot, buttonholed him and kept on talking in terrible French until we took off for Arras. I'm sure that to this day that gallant, polite Frenchman has no idea of the identity of the "British Colonel" he flew to the front that morning. Within a few hours I was on the Belgian frontier and beginning the job that I've been doing ever since—filming wars.

The Silent March

I can only imagine what a soldier feels as he goes into war, but I do know that my knees turned to water at the thought of taking a film camera into action. Just as a soldier is blooded, so a cameraman must be initiated into the ranks of war cameramen. My initiation came soon enough.

The long, straight Belgian roads were packed tight with refugees, fleeing from Nazi persecution, heading for the safety of France. The road was so congested that I pulled my car on one side to let them pass, then climbed on to an estaminet roof to get a shot of the distressing scenes. The refugees were clad in all sorts of clothing, some pushing prams, some leading horses, some staggering, dragging wounded limbs.

There were old and young, fit and sick, yet one thing was common to them all—the frightened stare in their eyes. Apart from the noise of their feet, the pram wheels on the cobbles, and the slow clippety-clop of the horses' hooves, there was silence. Nobody spoke, they kept on walking... endlessly walking.

I pointed the camera down the road towards Louvain and pressed the trigger; it ran for several seconds and then through the viewfinder I saw an incredible scene. As one man, all the refugees in the road dived for the ditches. In a split second the road was clear. I heard the roar of aircraft, big black shadows flew over me, and the machine-gun bullets burst in the road.

She Beat Her Head

One... two... three... four... five... six... I counted their shadows as they passed through my viewfinder. Then all was quiet, until I heard the moaning from the people who were either hit or so afraid they could no longer control themselves.

A young woman jumped and ran towards the building I was standing on. She stopped right under the camera and stood beating her head and hands against the wall. Then gradually she slid to the ground in a faint.

In a daze I looked at my camera; it was still running. I had not even switched it off. Almost unconsciously I looked at the focus—infinity, that's right. Lens stop—f/16, that's right. Still moving in a daze, I wound the camera spring for the next shot.

The road was still empty. Then I saw a child, about five, appear from the ditch and stand in the centre of the road. He looked around and I could see the panic in his eyes. His feet were glued to the ground on which he stood; he couldn't move. I heard a roar of aircraft above, then through my viewfinder I saw an old lady clamber into

the road. I pressed the camera trigger and panned the camera as she ran along the road. She grabbed the child in her arms and flung herself into the ditch. As she hit the ground, the shadows swooped along the road, pumping their noisy death into the ditches.

The noise of the aircraft died away, and those that could staggered up and continued their trek towards France. I changed the film magazine and sat by the roadside. Yesterday I would have thought of these shots as a scoop. Today, I was sick at having taken them. A helpless feeling came over me.

"What can one do to stop this sort of thing?" I kept asking myself as yet more refugees straggled past. There was only one answer—film as many of these atrocities as possible, and pray that they would be seen on the screens of the world to serve as a warning.

Shielded The Baby

In the days that followed I filmed some incredible scenes. The guardsman in Belgium who flung himself across a pram, shielding the baby with his body as the Messerschmitts strafed the road...

The old Belgian lady, outside Louvain, who walked through no-man's-land with artillery shells flying in both directions overhead. Up the road she went, carrying a pail of steaming hot tea and three loaves. Without a word she put them down beside the British anti-tank gun, then turned back across no-man's-land and walked into German occupation...

For two weeks the retreat went on, and I filmed it, until, at last, I arrived at Boulogne. Dog tired, I slept. But not for long. German planes bombed the front and scored a hit on the hotel in which the Duke of Gloucester was living. They started fires, so I got out of bed and took the cameras out into the street to get some night shots.

I met Lieutenant Gerrard of the French Army, an old friend, and we stood talking for a while. Suddenly we were interrupted by a frightened, bedraggled Frenchwoman. "M'sieu Lieutenant, there is somebody on the cliffs behind the hotel signalling the Boche bombers!" she gasped.

He Was Beyond Help

Gerrard looked around, uncertain, and then, politely excusing himself, he ran up the road. The Frenchwoman disappeared into the darkness. The German aircraft came over again, and the air was filled with their screaming bombs. I heard one hit near the bandstand on the front. I ran there with the camera, and in the dark tripped over something lying in the road. I flashed a torch—and saw that Lieutenant Gerrard was beyond help.

As I looked down at his body, I discovered something about my job which has stayed with me ever since. The horror of pointing a camera at people and things, completely ignoring their feelings, and my own too. Recording on film, events I would rather not even see.

When a person is stricken with grief, I must get a "close-up." When my French friend lies dead, I have to take a shot of his body being carried away, an abstract shape on a stretcher, silhouetted against the flames of burning Boulogne. Yet it must be done, my job as a news cameraman is to film the facts and report facts. The camera can lie, but in war it doesn't have to—the truth is propaganda enough.

The next day we were evacuated from Boulogne. For a cameraman this

Consider your verdict

In the case on page 40, the judge said that, in general, anything which grows on land or is annexed to it becomes part of that land. Therefore Well had bought the growing shrubs and the fruit on the trees when he bought the property. The summer house was not attached to the land and did not form part of the architectural layout of the garden; therefore it remained Spark's, but he had to pay for the shrubs and fruit.



The Learned Judge
always
adjourns for



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"You'll like it"

LETTERS OF CONSEQUENCE

"After this letter—my
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SAYS VALERIE HOBSON

AT LAST a British actress heads the cast in an American musical at Drury Lane! To the part of Anna in "The King and I" Miss Valerie Hobson brings all the charm and elegance for which she is so justly known.

"In the beginning, the very idea of attempting a part so unusual for me gave me many qualms," says Valerie Hobson. "But the more I read the script the more in love with it I became, and finally I wrote agreeing to an audition in New York. That letter led to my most exciting rôle!"

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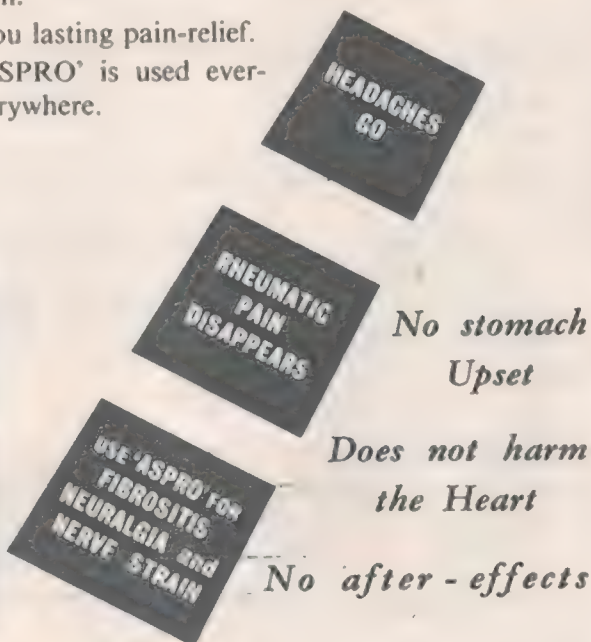
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was no glorious moment. I knew that I was leaving behind the biggest story of my short career. I knew that the best film story had yet to be enacted farther north, where the main part of the B.E.F. was fighting back to Dunkirk.

I wanted to go there, as did all the news cameramen in France at that moment, but we came up against the army. As press correspondents we were subject to military discipline, and when a colonel gave us the alternative of being put aboard under military arrest or walking aboard as "gentlemen," we left Britain's grandest moment uncovered. So the wonder of Dunkirk was almost unfilmed, apart from a few hundred feet shot by Charles Martin of Pathé. His pictures are famous—and they are the only ones.

Under Secret Orders

Martin was evacuated from Boulogne with the rest of the correspondents. On arrival in England he was posted to the navy at Harwich. That night, he went straight on board a destroyer and sailed under secret orders. The moment the ship left the quayside, he fell asleep. When he awoke, only a few hours later, his ship was standing off the beaches of Dunkirk.

Long, winding streams of British and French soldiers, up to their necks in the sea, were wading towards his ship. At first light the German planes flew over and bombed and machine-gunned the ship, and Martin made some shots. Then he did what a cameraman is often tempted to do—he put his camera away in its case and spent the rest of his time helping the tired soldiers to clamber up the nets into the safe hands of the British Navy.

In early July, 1940, Universal News held a war conference. The future coverage of the war had to be discussed—where should our cameramen be positioned to ensure the maximum coverage?

There was the invasion scare; should we have our men stand by on the south and east coasts and wait for the Germans to land? Would the Germans precede their invasion by blitzing the airfields? Must have a man standing by for that. Will the Italians attack Egypt? Must have a man in Egypt. London may get bombed. Must have a man standing by for that. It went on for hours. There were only eight cameramen at that time. We were going to be busy.

Tree Versus Tank

My first assignment was to boost the nation's morale. "I don't care what you do," said my editor, "but bring me back a story on the nation's strength."

I went to Leatherhead, in Surrey, to film a tank demonstration. Here, I was introduced to the major in command. He was a huge man, with a moustache the size of a scrubbing brush.

It was clear from the start that he considered the press were a damned nuisance. Nevertheless, he played his part well, and managed to make his handful of tanks look quite impressive as we filmed them rumbling through river and ditch, and up and down hills.

But I was not satisfied. As a child I saw a picture of an elephant felling a huge tree by pulling and pushing with his trunk, and then leaning his immense weight against it until it cracked. I looked first at the tanks, then at a nearby tree. If an elephant

could push a tree down, surely a tank could do likewise with a little help.

"Major," I said, "if we cut one of those trees halfway through, would one of your tanks be able to push it over?"

The major was indignant at the suggestion that help was needed. "Get your camera ready!" he commanded, and called for a sergeant. "Sergeant, you see that tree?" He pointed to the biggest in sight. "Well, take your tank and knock it over!"

"That tree, sir?"

"Yes, that tree!"

The sergeant got back into his tank. The major gave him a signal to start. I set the camera running. "Now watch, you!" the major barked.

The tank climbed the tree. The harder it pushed, the higher it climbed. The tree didn't budge, the tank's engines screamed in anger, as did the major.

"Tell him to try again!" he barked.

The tank retreated and took it at a run this time. It hit the tree with a crash, and then began climbing again. At one time I thought it would topple over backwards. The major watched in silence and then, as the tank's crew pulled back, he sent for the sergeant. "Go back to the workshops and get a saw. A ruddy great saw!" he ordered.

"A saw, sir?"

"Yes. A saw. Cut that tree halfway through and then knock it down with your tank, if you can!" he said nastily. He turned to me, saluted, and said: "Good day to you!" and marched off.

In London, the blitz had started. Every time the air-raid siren blew cameramen went out to get the pictures in the same manner as the air-raid wardens went out to their tasks.

Filming The Blitz

I had a specific job during the first daylight raids on London. Immediately the warning sounded, I had to rush to the rooftop of the office building to film the air-raid.

This scheme did not work out as planned, though. I made innumerable shots of the German formations passing high overhead, and the fighters sometimes diving among them, but unless the bombs fell close I could see nothing, the view being obscured by buildings. The boss felt we could find a "better spot," as he put it.

One day, during an all-clear period, he went on the roof and looked around. He spotted the tower of the University of London in Malet Street. "Just the spot!" he said, "and luckily the Ministry of Information have got the building for the duration."

He ran down to the office. Snatching up the phone, he yelled: "Ministry of Information immediately... hallo... give me Ted Adams!"

I reached for the afternoon paper.

"Hallo, Ted. Listen! I want your tower. Yes, your tower. I want to put Ronnie Noble on top of it for the air-raids..." He stopped and listened; his expression changed. "Last night, eh? Hm. Forget it for a while, then." He rang off.

"Give me the paper," he said. I looked over his shoulder as he searched for a paragraph. I saw it at the foot of the page: "The Ministry of Information building received a glancing blow in last night's blitz..." It went on to tell how a lump of concrete had been knocked off the tower, but no real damage had been done.

"Never mind, Noble," said my

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just invented for neutralizing unexploded bombs. It was being used in London for the first time that day, and I'd made a movie of it!

Just then a Pathé cameraman came in for some tea. "Feel the blast?" he asked. We nodded.

"That unexploded bomb in Regent Street just went off. Must have been a big one," he told us.

The boss sent another cameraman to cover the "aftermath" and gave me the evening off. Next morning we had the bad news. The War Office had censored all my shots of the bomb and the secret equipment—not a surprising decision really. The films were not freed until after VE-Day.

Not long after the Dunkirk evacuation, I was assigned to accompany the late King George VI on a tour of the Eastern Command. The tour lasted two days, and was not shaping up as a newsreel story should. I was in the last car of a convoy of sixteen. The King would step from his car, shake hands, meet some of the men, look around and then get into his car to go on to the next location. He was getting a wonderful reception wherever he went, but I was unable to film it, for by the time I clambered out of car number sixteen and pushed my way through the closing crowd, the King was stepping back into the car ready to go on to the next location.

He Lost His Temper

I complained to the authorities, but they felt they "couldn't help, old boy!" Gradually, I came to the conclusion that I must talk to the King himself. This was rather a risky decision, but I felt that the King realized the value of these films, and that he would not be content with this kind of arrangement, particularly as he and the rest of the Royal Family had always been extremely considerate to the press whenever it was possible.

I determined that when the chance came I would try to speak to him. But almost as though the authorities sensed my intention, I was blocked every time by an official.

Finally, we were on the east coast sea-wall, and I had a particular shot that I wanted to get, but once again the brass hats were efficiently ruining everything. I lost my temper and spoke far too loudly. "I wish to talk with His Majesty!" I bellowed, and then felt like falling through the earth with shame.

"Of course you can't," replied the official.

But he also spoke too loudly, for the King heard and walked over to where we were arguing.

"Anybody can speak to the King," said His Majesty. "What is it?"

"Well, sir, I would like to get a shot of you. Standing on the water's edge looking out to sea. Looking towards the invader."

"Yes, that's a good idea," replied the King, "but would it not be better a little farther on, with the blockhouse in the background?"

We all walked to the nearby blockhouse, and on the way the King discussed my camera. Although it was a professional model, he knew it well enough to point out certain snags and advantages. With a smile, he said: "Now put me where you want me."

Cheers For The King

And I took what I consider one of the best shots ever. It showed the King with the guns behind him, staring out over the east coast, and in his face was the determination that we all felt after Dunkirk.

I went to the cinema in Chatham a few days later, and the story of the King's tour was included in the newsreel. As the shot of His Majesty gazing across the North Sea came on to the screen, the whole cinema audience stood to its feet and cheered. I found myself cheering with the rest.

It wasn't until afterwards that I realized we were applauding the shot I had taken myself.

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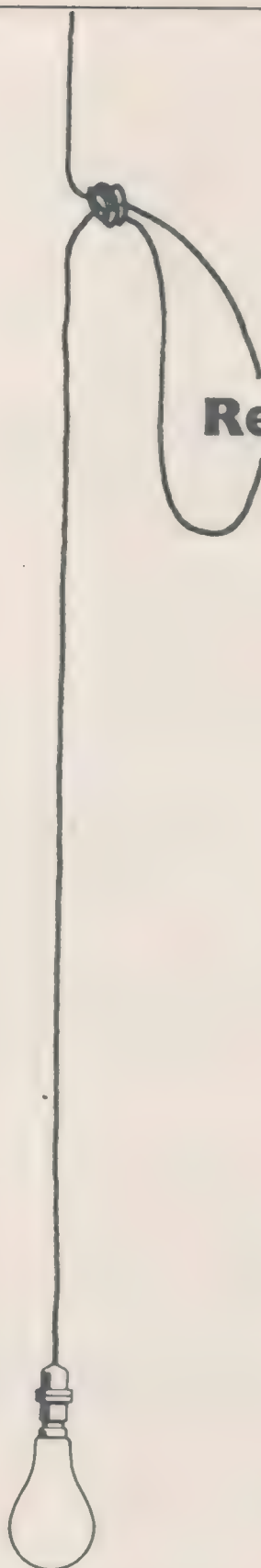
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WHO'S WHO?



They look alike, but their lives have been very different. From the jumbled details on the right, can you provide each man with his potted biography—and his name? The answers will be found on page 51.

- BORN:**
- A. Thirty-two years ago in Tonbridge, Kent, a corn merchant's son.
 - B. Forty-two years ago in Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, the son of a retired army officer.
- FIRST JOB:**
- C. A commercial artist in Brussels.
 - D. Learning to fly.
- HAS SAID:**
- E. "Fame is a short-lived thing—and the public's memory is sometimes even shorter."
 - F. "We were first up Everest: let us be the first on the moon."
- FAMOUS FOR:**
- G. Getting around quickly on his own.
 - H. His smile—and his wife.

CASTLE MINERVA

Continued from page 21

minutes of exasperation to get it into his thick head that the colonel was meeting Johnson in Perpignan, that I didn't know how or where to reach him but, if Marseilles could do so, I wanted the colonel to ring me at once.

In the end I got a promise that this would be done if possible and the last word I heard was . . . "irregular."

I knew perfectly well what would happen. In a few minutes Marseilles would ring back to the villa and ask for me. They would then ask me if I had just spoken to them. I was rather looking forward to that moment.

From the telephone I went into the kitchen. Brindle had the radio on: dance music, very soft and sweet. I surprised him humming to himself, but he went wooden the moment he saw me. He was cleaning fish for dinner.

I said: "Are there any guns in the house?"

He looked at me and there wasn't even a flicker of surprise in him.

"Two, sir."

"Let's have one."

He looked at me steadily for a moment and then he slowly bent down and drew open the table drawer. He handed me an old service Colt .45.

"Ammunition?" I said.

Brindle put his hand into his pocket and then tipped six bullets on to the table. I picked them up.

"You was always inclined to pull a bit to the left, if I remember, sir."

"I was." I tossed the colonel's key of Jabal's bedroom—the only key left now—over to him. "You'll lock our friend in tonight. Then we'll take turns to sit outside the bedroom until the colonel gets back."

"Are we expecting trouble, sir?"

"Maybe. You'll want the other gun. And Brindle . . . I don't want Jabal to hear about this."

"Quite, sir."

At that moment the telephone went. It was from Marseilles. When I confirmed that I had telephoned before, the voice was instantly helpful. If the colonel could be found it would be done.

After dinner, I started a game of chess with Jabal. My mind was not on the game and he beat me easily. I think he knew then that something was in the air, but he asked no questions and I liked him for that.

He went up to his room at ten and, with Brindle, I saw him locked in. I left Brindle up there, squatting on a cushion, his gun resting on his legs. "I shall be in the garden," I told him. "If there's any trouble you'll hear the dogs."

I put on a sweater and went out into the garden and sat in the shadows. I sat there thinking of Sarrasin and Paviot. They might well be small-time bungling smugglers . . . but they might not. I had to guard against that risk. And from them I began to think of Sophie, wondering what had brought her into their lives. . . .

It was a lovely night, warm and

soft and with an occasional current of air as though somewhere a curtain was swinging gently. I sat there for an hour. And then, the noise growing slowly, I heard the unmistakable sound of oars knocking against wooden rowlocks.

A few moments later I saw the boat, a dark shape about fifty yards offshore and coming up from Banyuls. I got up and, keeping to the shadows, went down to the landing stage.

As I went, the dogs which had been wandering around the garden came padding up to me and followed me down, growling softly. Just as I reached the landing stage, the boat turned towards the shore. By the light of the stars and a pale crescent of moon which had just begun to lift itself clear of the mauve stretch of sea, I could pick out the people in the boat.

GEORGE SARRASIN was rowing. In the stern was a man I had never seen before, a short, nondescript looking creature in a light raincoat and a beret. When the boat was a couple of yards from the steps, George pulled round and it rested there, swaying gently. George's white, slab-like face turned full towards me and he said:

"Bonsoir monsieur."

I said: "Sarrasin—this is private property. Keep off it."

He nodded as though considering this point. Then he said: "It is very hard to do business with you."

"Not hard. Impossible."

As I spoke, I brought the Colt from behind my back and the faint moonlight slid in an oily ripple along its barrel. The boat drifted inshore.

George looked from the revolver to me and again he shook his head: "You would use that?"

He sounded a little sad, as though we were friends and I had affronted him. I had the feeling that he wasn't caring a damn about me, that he was absolutely sure of himself. It was a feeling that I'd known before; the fine sense which tells you that your adversary has a card up his sleeve and doesn't care if you know it.

"I'll use it," I replied, "if you make it necessary."

"You are making a great mistake. However, since you are determined. . . ." He leaned forward to take up his oars. And then, a fraction of a second too late, I realized that this was the moment of the trump card. I had been waiting for it, wondering how it could come, trying to foresee it, and the mistake I made was anticipating subtlety. There was a whisper of noise behind me and I swung round towards the shadow of the boathouse.

Part of the shadow moved, crowded in on me, and something smashed at my head. I went down like a log and the last thing with me was the sound of my own breath, forced from me in a sob of angry futility.

It must have been a good hour later before I came round. I felt stupid and muzzy and I lay for a while staring up at the stars through the pine branches, not really aware of myself or of what

had happened. The bitch wolf-hound came and whined about me. Slowly I pulled myself up. My legs felt like rubber and, the moment I was upright, I was sick. I felt better after that, but light-headed still, and I had the extraordinary sensation of being divorced from my body, of watching it move erratically up the path to the house and of wanting desperately to get back into it and communicate urgency and concise understanding to it.

In the house the lights were burning in the hall and up the stairs. At the top of the stairs lay Brindle. He was sprawled out with his automatic close to his hand and was groaning gently to himself. I stepped past him to Jabal's room. The door was open and the room was empty. It was then that I came back to myself, my outside self overlapping and then fitting itself to my stumbling body in the way the images are brought into focus in a camera.

I went back to Brindle, but he was still out and I could see that he'd taken a crack over the head, too. I was about to go to the bathroom to get some water for him when the telephone in the hall began to ring.

I went down the stairs to it as quickly as I could, and picked up the phone. It was the colonel.

"David? Why did you want me? Has anything happened?"

I said: "Where are you?"

"Perpignan."

"Then get back here. Jabal's gone. . . ."

At the other end I heard him swear, not with anger, but with a note of sick despair. I told him as well as I could what had happened.

There was a pause. Then he said: "Stick there and wait for me."

I went up to Brindle again, hauled him along to his room and put him on his bed. Then I went down to the boathouse.

The launch was in its place and there was no sign of the rowboat. As I came back to the house the dogs joined me and, thinking of Brindle upstairs, Brindle who must have been taken by surprise, I suddenly realized that the dogs hadn't given him any warning. It was something I didn't understand at all. Even when I had gone down to Sarrasin, the dogs had only growled softly.

In the lounge I fixed myself another drink and sat there trying to sort things out. I must have dropped off to sleep. When I woke it was two o'clock and Drexel was standing in front of me with another man who I soon learned was Johnson.

DREXEL was grim and efficient, as I expected him to be. Whatever he was feeling underneath he was not showing it. Johnson was a tall, shadow-like creature who said hardly anything.

Drexel fixed my head. Whatever had hit me had been blunt, not making much of a cut. While he did it he made me go through my story, asking a question now and again. When it was over he said: "All right. Now you get some sleep."

He came up to the bedroom with me and I wanted to say something but there was nothing I could say. I dropped off to sleep, hearing the telephone and the sound of movement and voices throughout the house.

I was awake by nine o'clock the next morning. I went along to the bathroom and shaved and showered. I wasn't feeling too bad physically, no worse than having a bad hangover. It was a fine morning, calm, bright and not yet hot. Through the open window I could see the wall gate. There was a gendarme standing by it. Near the garage was a long low Citroën car.

When I got back to my room, Brindle was setting my breakfast on the table by the window. He looked all right except for a wad of plaster just behind his right ear.

"The colonel's compliments, sir, and he would appreciate it if you kept to your room until he calls for you."

He was gone before I could question him, and it was an hour before he appeared again and said the colonel would like to see me.

Drexel was in the lounge. When I

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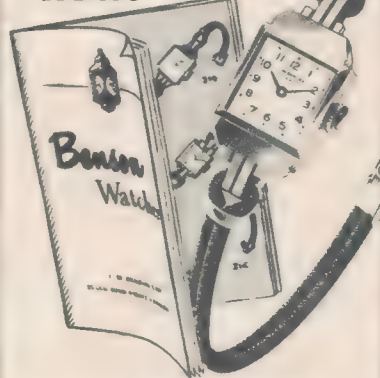
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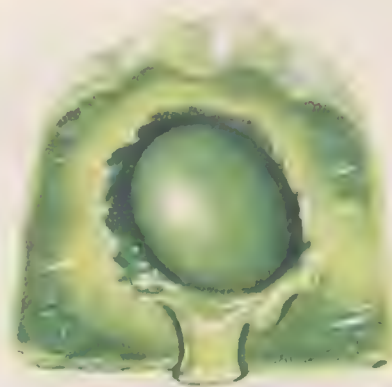
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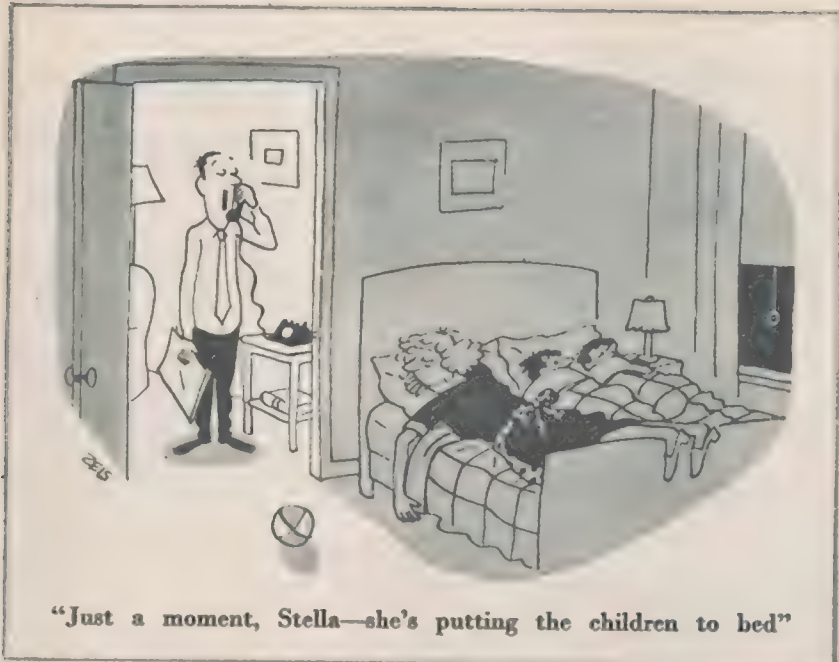
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went in, he was standing by the window and there was another man sitting at a small table close to the fireplace. Drexel asked me how I was, and then introduced me to the other man. He was Monsieur Didier, a Commissioner of Police from Marseilles—or it may have been Toulouse, because at that moment I wasn't really listening. I was watching Drexel. I could not say he was avoiding me but he was making no movement towards me.

I said: "Is there any news?"
"No. Not so far. Though we've got things moving." He came across the room, one hand rubbing his chin, his eyes on the ground, and he might have been talking to himself. "There's been a press release from Ramaut that Jabal left a week ago for London via France. That's Sheik Ahmed ben Fa'id playing ball, of course."

"Do you think he's got hold of Jabal?"

"Possibly. But there's still a chance to find him."

He halted suddenly and beat a fist into his palm and said: "I can't understand how anyone could have got on to us so quickly. There's been a leak somewhere." As he finished speaking, he raised his head and looked at me and I knew then what he was trying not to think. It was like being hit in the face. I took the shock hard, and heard my inner self saying: *He can't think that! He can't!* But I knew damned well that he did, or was coming to it.

I was going to say something, but he forestalled me.

"David, I've told Didier all you told me, but he's got some questions to ask you." He paused and momentarily he smiled, for the first time, and I knew it was to cover his embarrassment.

I sat down and looked at Didier and said: "Go ahead, monsieur."

ELBOWS on the table, Monsieur Didier rested his chin on tented fingers and stared at me. His were friendly brown eyes and the stare was broken now and again by a nervous flutter of the eyelids. He had short, stubby fingers, not too well kept, as though he did a lot of gardening.

He said: "The three people you have described—you say they made your acquaintance by design?"

"They did."

"You told the colonel nothing about them until you lost your key?"

"I was going to tell him." It sounded weak and made me angry with myself.

"It strikes me as odd that, after your refusal to co-operate, they so

conveniently warned you they were coming."

"I think it's odd, too."

"We agree. In fact, I don't think there is any truth in the story."

"In *their* story," I corrected, and I was beginning to see how difficult it might be to hold my temper.

"In *their* story. Or—could it be in yours?"

"They came for the launch, didn't they? They also cracked me on the head—and Brindle."

"I was coming to that. How do we know they came for the launch?"

"I saw them."

"But no one else."

"Brindle?"

"He saw no one. He heard a noise from the stairs and, going to investigate, was hit from behind. I find the whole thing very confusing. Can you explain, for instance, why they should come for a launch which you had already refused them, and why they should conveniently telephone you and tell you they were coming?"

"It sounds absurd, but it's damned well true." I stood up and looked at Drexel. "Look colonel, why don't you both come out into the open and say what you think." I couldn't keep the bitterness from my voice.

"Take it easy, David. See it from our point of view. The whole thing's a muddle and we're trying to get it straight."

DIDIER ignored the passage and went on: "Can you explain why the dogs shouldn't have barked when these strangers entered the grounds? That at least would have given Brindle some warning."

"I don't know. I've been puzzled by that." I had a fresh hold on myself. I wanted to help Drexel and if this would get us anywhere I was prepared to force under my own feelings. But it wasn't easy.

Didier blinked at the ceiling. "The key you lost. Do you think it could have been stolen?"

"I suppose it could have been."

"It was—or else it was fortunately found—for it was used to unlock Jabal's door last night."

"Didn't they take a key from Brindle?"

"No. After you left him he hid his in the cistern of the water closet in the bathroom. It was there this morning."

"I can see what you're driving at. You think I may have helped these people in some way. Or even arranged this. I don't blame you for examining that angle—but it's just too fantastic for words. I took every precaution I could. I tried to get in touch with the colonel. I phoned Marseilles. I armed myself and I put Brindle on guard."

"And despite all that—Jabal was taken."

I could have kicked him in the face; he said it in such an unctuous manner, the petty triumph of an official.

"Maybe Brindle's in the thing with me, too," I said sarcastically. "We

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SAV. 6

WHO'S WHO?

A D F G are the clues on page 48 which help to identify the man on the left as Neville Duke, the test pilot.

B C E H identify the man on the right as Michael Wilding, the actor, who is married to film star Elizabeth Taylor.



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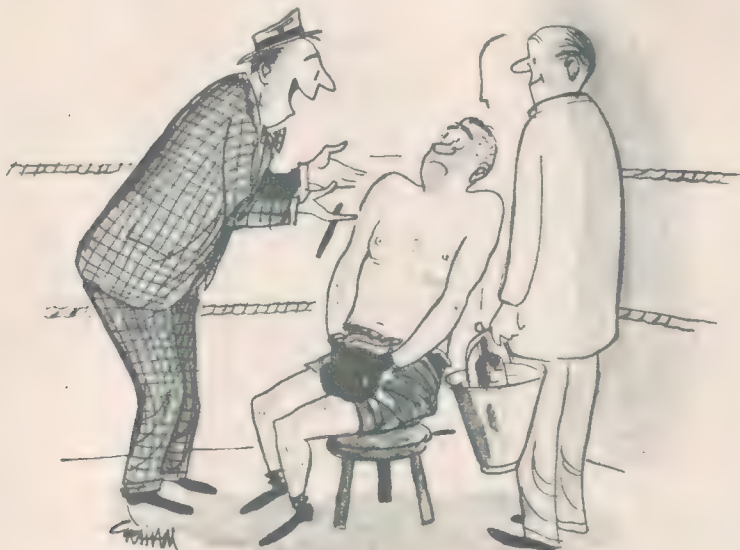


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"Of course you're nervous, Joe—we're all nervous"

knocked one another over the head to give ourselves good alibis."

"You could have done." There was no shaking him and I suddenly wanted to laugh at the absurdity of the situation. But he went on quickly: "What I would like to know is which of you washed up the coffee cups. Brindle says he didn't."

"Coffee cups?"

"Yes. There is no sign of struggle in Jabal's room. He may have been drugged before his room was entered. The coffee cups you both used after dinner were in the kitchen, washed."

I turned to Drexel. "Colonel—are you with him in this?"

He came over to me slowly, biting his lower lip and he put his hand on my shoulder.

"David, I'm not anywhere. I'm not interested in anything but the truth. I'm sorry, I'm not taking your word or anybody else's unless it can be proved. Do you think I like standing by and listening to this? But I'm not stopping it, not if it gets me an inch nearer the truth."

There was worse to come.

Monsieur Didier blinked, wrote a few notes and then, without looking up, said: "You are not a rich man, Mr. Fraser?"

"Of course not. I'm a school-master."

"Maybe you'd like to be something different. Maybe you'd like to have money?"

"Who wouldn't?" I was weary of him now, but not angry, and I let all the life go from my voice. "Monsieur Didier—you're chasing the wrong hare. Why don't you get out and look for Jabal instead of sitting on your backside wasting time with me?" And I said it in the same tone that I might have remarked on the weather, not caring a damn how he would take it. To his credit, he took it well.

He gave me a little nod, stood up and said: "Touché. You will oblige me by staying in this room. Later today I should like you to come to headquarters with me."

He went out and the opening door showed me that there was a gendarme outside. Drexel lingered for a moment. He came close to me and then, unexpectedly, his face cleared and he smiled, really for me this time, and said: "No hard feelings, David. It's just that the whole thing is slipping through my hands like sand."

"Forget it. Didier doesn't understand. Don't worry about me."

I think he wanted to say something else, but it wouldn't come. He punched my shoulder affectionately and then left me.

I sat there alone in the room. I could see that Didier might have the beginnings of a half-baked case against me, but I could not feel any real apprehension and after a time I found

that my thoughts had gone to Sophie.

Just where she stood in all this confusion I wanted to know more than anything. She had told me that Sarrasin and company were smugglers and wanted the launch. This was a lie. They had come for Jabal. But did she know it was a lie? I wanted the answer to that desperately.

The only one I could think of was that Sarrasin and company had started off as smugglers and then in some way had learned about Jabal and had seen the rich possibilities of kidnapping. They could make a deal with either side—with the regent, though this would mean the end of Jabal, or with the oil company and British interests.

I sat there mulling it all over, and outside in the hall I heard the telephone go constantly and a parade of different voices.

The hours went by. I read all the magazines in the place and then I dropped off to sleep.

WHEN I woke, it was dark outside and Drexel and Didier had just come into the room. Drexel was fixing himself a whisky and he brought one over for me.

I took it, and said, "Well?"

"No news. We've combed Argelès-sur-Mer for your three birds. No one knows them. Your espadrille seller—Jean Cagou—remembers you with them but he doesn't know them. Nobody knows them."

"And Jabal?"

"Not a trace."

Didier, carrying a black brief-case, came forward. I could see he was not approving of this conversation.

"Colonel Drexel . . . I must get back. There is much to be done."

Drexel nodded and he held out my raincoat to me. "Better put this on, David. There's quite a wind."

I had the feeling that he was sorry for what had happened that morning; that he was trying to make it up to me, reaching out again to draw me closer to him. But he knew and I knew that it could never be the same. We had both taken a step forward and away from each other. I would still go to hell for him. But now, instead of worship, there was understanding; instead of faith, a compassionate logic.

Outside the wind was blowing strongly and the sky was suddy with little clouds. I got into the Citroën, and sat in the back with Didier. One of his men on a motor-cycle went ahead of us along the road to Port-Vendres. He must have been an impatient man for he was soon far ahead of us and then eventually lost to sight.

I said to Didier: "Where are we going?"

"Perpignan." His tone was clear enough: he was in no mood for conversation with me. I sat there, disliking him more and more.

I don't know where we were on the

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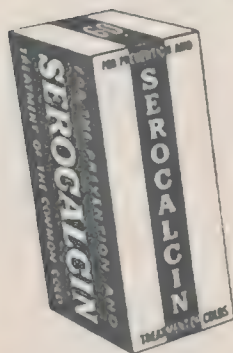
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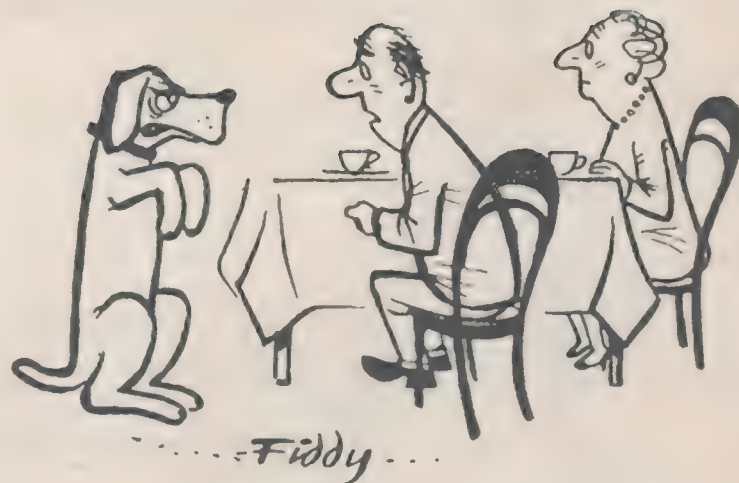
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"I can't make up my mind whether he's begging or demanding"

road when I saw the torch flash from ahead. Beyond Argelès-sur-Mer, I think, but not as far up as the point where the road crosses the River Tech on its way to the sea.

Didier muttered something to the driver and the man slowed. I think he thought as I did that it might be our motor-cyclist signalling. Then the headlights picked up the figure of a man in the road centre, the torch swinging in slow arcs from his hand.

"Qu'est-ce qu'il y a?"

There was no answer, not in words; only an incredible swiftness of movement and manoeuvre that left both Didier and myself helpless. The nearest I got to doing anything was a half move of my arm towards my door handle and the word, shouted in surprise: "Paviot!"

The driving door was jerked open and the driver was pulled out. As he was dragged into the road I saw Paviot's arm go up and then down and, although the darkness hid it from me, I could tell he held a knife. The driver sighed and then gave a scream that died into a whisper. Paviot let him drop to the ground and slid into the driving seat.

At the same moment, the doors on either side of Didier and myself were jerked open. George Sarasin, the lower part of his face masked, slid in and forced me over, his hand holding a gun against my ribs. On the other side of me, a small figure in raincoat and beret, his face masked, too, held a gun on Didier and a rasping voice said:

"Out!"

Didier was grabbed by the arm, pulled out, and then forced by the gun in his back to move to the side of the road. He stood there with his hands raised. Above the wind I heard his voice.

"Fraser. . . . You won't get away with this!"

I did not get his meaning then, and I was given no chance to reply. Paviot turned the car in the road with two long backing and forward movements. When he was round, the man with Didier gave him a push that sent him over the road bank into the ditch, and then came running to the car. He jumped in beside Paviot.

The car drove off at top speed back along the road it had just travelled. There was nothing I could have done. Not a thing. It had been a dark pantomime with no part in it for me except to watch.

Paviot whistled thinly to himself as he drove. Sarasin kept a revolver pressed into my ribs. "Don't talk," he said, "and don't make trouble."

We went back as far as Argelès and then swung away from the coast. We were speeding now along the road to Le Boulou and for a while I wondered if they were heading for the border. Wherever they were going, it would be dangerous for them to remain on the road long in Didier's car.

We were some way out of Argelès when the car stopped. Paviot got out of the driving seat and the other man

slid across and took his place. Paviot opened my door and motioned me out. I obeyed and Sarasin came behind me with the revolver.

I heard Sarasin say to the driver: "Take it as near Le Perthus as you can and then ditch it."

I knew what that meant. Le Perthus was beyond Le Boulou and on the border. If the ditched car were found there, it would look as though we had gone across the Spanish frontier.

The car went off, its tail-light wreathed with a plume of exhaust gases. Sarasin hustled me into the side of the road and Paviot produced a long length of rope from around his waist. He tied it about himself and then, leaving a working length, looped it round my waist and passed the spare end to Sarasin, who fastened it about his own middle. We were roped up like climbers. It would be difficult for me to make a break from them.

Sarasin said: "Keep going and don't give trouble. It will serve nothing but unpleasantness."

I said nothing because I had nothing to say to them. I didn't understand what it was all about and for the moment I wasn't bothering. All I knew was that I meant to give them the slip as soon as I could.

Now we began to climb through a plantation of young fir trees. The ground was slippery with loose needles. Very soon we were crossing a rocky plateau and the path dipped into a narrow valley. The wind was dead in our faces and I knew we were moving north. The young moon was up now, slipping in and out of a patchwork of small clouds. I saw that the far side of the valley was terraced with vines and away to the left thought I could make out the shape of a house, probably the cabin of the vigneron.

I put my hands in my raincoat pocket and plodded after Paviot; behind me I could hear the even breathing of Sarasin. The raincoat had slit pockets that allowed me to get at the pockets of my jacket. I got hold of my penknife and opened it. They should have searched me.

At the head of the valley slope, the path got rougher, twisting through patches of tall, white heather and a tangle of broken boulders. Leaning forward to the slope, I brought my hands out of my pocket and, holding lightly to the rope about my waist, I cut into it. In a few moments I had seen through the loop. With my left hand I held the two ends together. All I had to do now was to wait for the moon to go behind a cloud and then run for it. I was in good condition and I felt that if I got only a short start I stood a chance of losing them.

I cocked an eye up to the sky. A largish cloud was scudding up towards the moon. I waited, plugging forward, and there was a growing edge of excitement in me. Fifteen seconds, I thought, and the moon would be covered.

To be continued next week

HELD TO RANSOM

Continued from page 29

number of villages every fortnight. The experts had advised against them. There wasn't enough staff, there couldn't be proper supervision, the cost was out of all proportion, and so on. But he had put the scheme through and now on his office wall there was, for every visitor to see, a steeply ascending graph showing the number of cases successfully treated.

And now, a comfortable retirement lay before him. Of course, his advice on colonial affairs would always be reliable to those who sought it. The experience of an old hand. . . .

He was looking out for the road to Assabassa along which he had often glanced wistfully on previous journeys. to and from Latuba.

"That's it, Mensah," he told his driver. "We turn down there."

THE car stopped at the corner of the narrow bush road which seemed to lose itself after a few yards in a green tangled density.

"We go take dis road?" asked the driver as his ebony face peered along the track.

The heat of the forest descended on them as Sir Charles explained.

"That's right. Assabassa tonight and Latuba tomorrow."

"Assabassa no be good place," put in the old cook from his seat among the baggage at the back of the car. "It be bush place pass all."

"Nonsense," said Sir Charles. "You talk like an old market woman. Come along, Mensah, it's too damned hot here."

He dismissed Mensah's protests about the quality of the road, having already made some discreet inquiries from a previous driver of his who was now an independent lorry owner and who sometimes ran a load of cheap, imported goods into Assabassa for sale to the villagers. Kofi Duku had said the road was passable. He had confirmed that the resthouse was still standing, as well.

They got along fairly well, though slowly, with the grass down the centre of the road gently brushing the chassis of the car and the overgrowing vegetation on either side pressing in closely. But the white wheeltracks before them were smooth and hard.

Sir Charles relaxed. He could sit back and begin to enjoy his little adventure. There was an agreeable sense of being engaged on an escapade, which would never be known to anyone but himself until perhaps he chose to dramatize it a little in his memoirs.

He did not attempt to recognize any of the scenery. One bush road was like the rest. The heavy green tangle on each side had no distinguishing features. What he did remember from that first journey, when he had been coming in the opposite direction, was the thrill of seeing everything for the first time and the expectation with which he had greeted every bend in the road. Of course no bend had revealed anything fresh, except an occasional village, and the villages, too, were all the same with their huts of tawny-coloured mud and rusting iron roofs, and the high forest round the outskirts. Only Assabassa was different, just because it was Assabassa, where he had spent his first night and heard the first rumbling of the African drums.

The car pulled up sharply.

"The bridge spoil," said Mensah.

In front of them was a bridge spanning a dried-up stream some two yards wide and consisting of half a dozen planks which even from the car they could see were loose and badly warped.

Sir Charles left the car and examined the timbers closely. He climbed down into the bed of the stream and looked up at the supporting joists. Then he got on to the bridge again and tested it with his weight in several places. He could not bring himself to turn back.

"We go try," he told his servants. "But first we go unload the car."

With looks and shrugs which said plainly that if their master was crazy enough to ditch the car and maroon

them here it was no fault of theirs, they took out all the baggage and piled it by the roadside. Sir Charles stood back, sweating a little. He would be in the dickens of a jam if the car fell into the river bed. It might be days before they got it out and by then the m.v. Tarkwa would be roughly at the Canaries.

"Come along, Mensah," he snapped. "Don't waste time."

Mensah resettled his blue uniform cap and ran the car back a few yards. He came forward in low gear at a fair pace. The front wheels bounced on to the bridge and with a rattle of planks bounced on to the road the other side. Before the rear wheels were across there came a splitting and wrenching, the rear of the car sagged, Mensah jammed the accelerator hard down, and with spinning wheels and a roar the car jolted up on to the opposite side. It had gone fifty yards before Mensah, taking no chances, drew up.

"Why go so bloody far?" shouted his master. "Come back here at once. We can't carry the loads all that distance."

While they were reloading the car, Sir Charles examined the broken bridge. He blamed Kofi Duku. The fellow was always overloading his lorry and this was the result—endangering the road for other users. He wiped his reddened face. It had been a near thing, by Jove, a damned near thing. And Mensah was a damned good driver. He deserved a bottle of beer. Sir Charles made a mental note to give him one at Assabassa.

An hour later they reached the resthouse, a squat, white building in a small clearing among the trees some fifty yards off the road. The resthouse was the same as he remembered it, and yet not quite the same. It was smarter, there was a neat lawn in front, there were flower-beds bordered with white stones.

When he saw the collection of diminutive desks and chairs inside, he laughed. The villagers had turned the place into a school. They had never risked asking permission, of course. It was Assabassa's only suitable building, no one had stayed in it for years, so they had gone ahead and used it.

There was no one about. Sir Charles remembered that the schools were on holiday. The doors and windows were left open. What happy people!

He had his drinks and his lunch among the Lilliputian desks and retired to his camp bed which the cook had erected in a room marked "Infant Class III." And while he slept, some passers-by on the road noticed there was a visitor and learned his identity from his servants.

WHEN Sir Charles awoke, there were two small boys in native clothes sitting dutifully outside the resthouse with presents from the Chief—a couple of chickens, a bowl of eggs and three pineapples.

"Fine," said Sir Charles. "I'll have one of the chickens roasted for dinner, cook, and you and Mensah can have the other. There ought to be at least two good eggs among this lot and I'll have them for breakfast tomorrow. The pineapples don't look too ripe. I might get them home on the ship."

He gave the two small boys some loose change and delightedly they scampered off.

"Tea, cook. And then I'll go down and greet the Chief."

Half an hour later he was walking down the road. He recalled how, on that first occasion, as soon as the lorry arrived, he had come hurrying along this same road, eager to take his first walk in the forest before the light went. He walked more slowly now, pausing several times. He would not see the forest again. The green twilight stillness with the branches interlocked high overhead and the heavy creepers looped and twisted and hanging down like ropes—it was immense and mysteriously powerful.

He walked on and soon the trees cleared and the road through the village lay before him with the small box-like dwellings on either side. He waved his stick cheerfully at the people in sight and called out greetings, but

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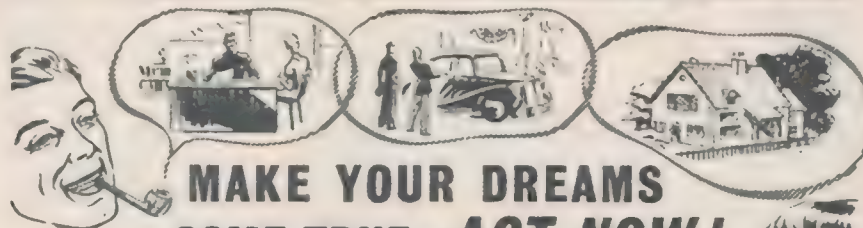
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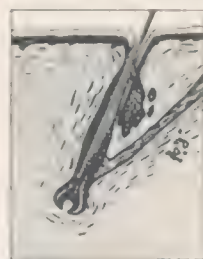
*To ignore warning signs like these
can lead to heavy loss of hair*

TAKE a look at the three men pictured here, then look at your own hair. The process by which dandruff, excessive greasiness of the scalp, or falling hair can develop into heavy loss of hair is a slow and insidious one over the years and is, in fact, under-nourishment of the hair roots. These roots do not receive all the necessary hair-forming substances and therefore wither and die. If you can recognise in the condition of your own hair even a slight resemblance to any one of the three examples, *do something about it now*. To ignore such warning signs may cause you great regret in later years—for once hair roots have died, no treatment on earth can bring them back to life.

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But Pure Silvikrin is only part of the story. Working in their specially equipped laboratories, Silvikrin experts have developed a range of products, all incorporating Pure Silvikrin, covering all aspects of hair health. Start the Silvikrin treatment and give yourself the best possible chance of perfect hair health.



Drawing based on a photomicrograph clearly showing the hair 'root' which must receive regular nourishment if the hair is to grow.



1 Vigorous hair-growth—but warning specks of dandruff. Unless checked, this condition causes faulty nutrition of the hair roots.



2 Hair receding at temples. Advanced dandruff has begun to affect the hair roots.



3 Result of long neglect of the hair. This man ignored many warning signs.

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Silvikrin The way to hair health

he could see at once that their manner was restrained. There wasn't the flash of teeth and lighting up of faces which would have shown real warmth of welcome. They saw him as Chief Commissioner, of course, the government personified. Did they fear he had come to close the school?

In the centre of the village he hesitated, trying to recollect where the Chief lived. An elderly African in long khaki trousers and collarless shirt detached himself from one of the watching groups and announced himself as the schoolmaster. He inclined his head and smiled—an oily smile, thought Sir Charles, disliking him on sight. But he was probably the only one who could speak English.

"I'd like to see the Chief. Can you show me his house?"

"Yes, sir." The smile broadened, the eyes were still lowered. "I shall be too pleased to direct you."

The meeting with the Chief and his councillors left an odd taste in Sir Charles's mouth also. It took place under a tree with the old men sitting in a half-circle and Sir Charles sitting on a chair some yards in front of them while the rest of the inhabitants looked on with arms folded, saying not a word.

Sir Charles had had hundreds of meetings like this before, both big and small, and as this was the last one he made the most of it. He thanked the Chief for his presents, he explained his sentimental reasons for revisiting Assabassa, he told them that tomorrow he would be at sea, that he was sorry he would not be seeing them again. With an eye on the schoolmaster, who was interpreting, he added he was sure the government would have no objection to the school continuing in the rest-house when the holidays were over. He had pleasure in making it a small donation; and he handed the schoolmaster an envelope containing a pound note.

THE Chief thanked him and then made a very long speech complaining that Assabassa had been woefully neglected by the government. No government officer had visited Assabassa for several years, there had been no improvements in the village at all, the people needed better roads, a post office, a better water supply, a dispensary, a bigger school building, a court house and so on.

It was quite a list. The Chief declared his happiness that at last the Chief Commissioner had come to witness the need for all these things himself, and it was in vain that Sir Charles pointed out once more that he was no longer the Chief Commissioner, that he was leaving the country finally at midday tomorrow, and that he was powerless to help them.

There was a stony silence of unbelief. If he had not come to assist them in their difficulties, then he must have come for some ulterior motive. A new tax, perhaps. Sir Charles left the meeting a little abashed.

"So your ship sails tomorrow, is that so?" asked the schoolmaster at his elbow. "And you will not return?"

"That's the absolute truth. I'm no more Chief Commissioner now than you are. I'm sorry I can't help you."

"It is very unfortunate," said the schoolmaster with another oily grin. "Darkness is coming. May I escort you to the resthouse?"

"No thanks. I'll manage."

He left the village more quickly than he had entered it. He did not like the atmosphere of sullenness that prevailed. A few of the young men hooted at him as he passed and he liked this even less. He was also puzzled. Dozens of times at other places he had had to refuse similar requests—one couldn't do everything at once—but never before had the people's disappointment changed to hostility.

The sight of the lamp burning on the resthouse veranda cheered him and he enjoyed his ablutions in the three inches of tepid water which the cook had poured into his collapsible canvas bath.

Then he sat out on the veranda in his deckchair with another bottle of beer and relaxed in the still African



night. This was better. This was what he had come for. Twenty-eight years ago he had sat here in this very spot with his service all before him, and now it was all behind him.

He reviewed the years, his various stations, his steps up the promotion ladder, his tussles with authority, the things he was proud of and the things he preferred to forget. He might have been rendering an account to the young man who had once sat here, striking a balance between aspirations and achievements.

The balance, he thought, was almost even. Only the governorship had eluded him, and now he didn't really want it. He had been long enough in harness. He had paid this small tribute to his youth and he was content to go. It was a comfortable three-hour run down to Latuba. He would leave at eight. That would give him an hour for his farewells before the ship sailed.

Those people this evening had been queer. He thought about them again over his roast chicken and tinned green peas while the insects pinged against the lamp and fell into the plate. This had disgusted him the last time he was here, but now he merely picked them out with his fingers and flicked them on the floor. Those people—now perhaps his servants could supply the key.

"You go to the village?" he asked the cook, who was waiting at table.

"No, sah. I never go for that place."

"You fear?"

"It be no good place. They be bush people and they no agree for strangers."

"Mensah go?"

"He stay here."

"He fear, too, eh?"

"He clean car," said the cook simply, putting down a plate of banana fritters.

Sir Charles sighed. After all these years he still couldn't get much out of them. They always considered it so much safer to say nothing than to say something. Words were too committal. In any case, he was probably seeing bogies. He did not believe the villagers would attempt any mischief. But he ordered Mensah to sleep in the car and before turning in he saw that all the doors and windows were bolted except for the windows in Infant Class III, which he had to leave open or he would

not have slept. But he piled up some desks and chairs beneath them so that anyone coming in would be sure to make a clatter.

He had a peaceful night. In the morning Mensah complained about mosquito bites. But that was all.

While the car was being loaded after breakfast, Sir Charles wandered about taking a few photographs in the early morning sun. ("Assabassa Resthouse, where I spent the first and last nights of my twenty-eight years' service.")

Sharp at eight, he was once more on the road. He was wondering if he could pick up a small memento—a piece of locally woven cloth or a bit of carving. But there seemed no likely vendors. He was nearly through Assabassa now—here was the curve at the end of the village. . . .

The car stopped.

"The road no good," said Mensah. "We no fit pass."

Right across the road was a wide gully riven deep by the annual rains. It was dry and refuse lay in the bottom of it. No one had ever bothered to fill it in. The road sloped into it almost sheer and rose just as steeply the other side. There was no way round it.

CURSING, Sir Charles got out of the car. There were quite a few people looking on as he kicked at the edges of the gully. But the sun had baked the ground as hard as concrete.

"We'll have to turn round," he said briskly. Then something seemed to turn over inside him as he remembered the broken bridge. Weakly, he leaned against the car. They couldn't go forward and they couldn't go back. And in four hours' time . . . already he seemed to hear the ship's siren and see the gangways being pulled up.

"Where's the Chief?" he demanded. "I must see the Chief at once."

The schoolmaster approached.

"Very unfortunately," he said, "the Chief is not here. He has gone to his farm."

"Then will you please send for him? I want the young men to make up this road. They'll have to turn out with picks and shovels. Damned quickly, too. I've got to be in Latuba by twelve o'clock."

The schoolmaster made an apologetic gesture. "The young men also—they have gone to their farms."

"But for heaven's sake—" Sir

Charles looked round. There was not a young man in sight. The spectators consisted solely of women and children and old men, who stared with pleasurable anticipation.

"Nevertheless," the schoolmaster continued, "I will send the Chief a message. Perhaps you will come and wait in his house."

Exasperated, Sir Charles pushed after him through the crowd. He had to keep his temper if he was to get anything done. But could they level out the road in an hour? Would they even begin in an hour? The sweat poured off him.

It was twenty minutes before the Chief and his elders assembled. With maddening deliberation, they seated themselves once more in a half-circle under the tree while a chair was placed for Sir Charles in front of them. The people drew close and watched intently as Sir Charles pleaded, flattered and almost went down on his knees. But the Chief would only repeat that the young men had gone to their farms for the day. Perhaps when they returned in the evening. . . .

"But that'll be too late! The ship leaves at twelve. I've told you. Don't you understand?"

"You see how it is," said the Chief, his lined old face inscrutable, while the schoolmaster interpreted. "Many times have I asked the government to help us with our roads and give us improvements. But they do not listen. You can see now how we suffer."

"But for goodness sake—" Sir Charles dropped his hands helplessly on the table which for some reason had been placed before him. It was already a quarter to nine. He could not even offer them money. He had only a pound or two in his pocket and some traveller's cheques for the voyage. He had closed his colonial banking account before leaving Kurakessie.

"Of course," went on the Chief, "I should like to help you if I could. But if I were to send for the young men they would not come. The government will not give me a court, so sometimes the young men do not like to obey me. But if you were to give me a letter to the District Commissioner instructing him to give us some of the improvements we need, the young men would be very pleased and then I think they would help you if I ask them."

SIR CHARLES WAS aghast. "But I couldn't do that! I'm not the Chief Commissioner any more. There's a new one now. You'll have to ask him. I can't give any orders; I tell you I'm leaving the country. . . ."

A smile flickered across the old Chief's face.

"This is ridiculous," Sir Charles burst out, thumping the table. "If your people don't make up that road in half an hour I'll report the whole matter to the government and you'll never get any assistance for as long as you live. I'll—I'll close the school!"

He glared at them and tensely they all watched him. Fish of any kind were rare in Assabassa and they had now caught a very big fish indeed. There it was, before their very eyes, already beginning to pant and blow and flap its great fins.

His threats made no impression. Nor did a promise to write personally to his successor with a strong recommendation that Assabassa should be generously assisted.

"The D.C. will listen to you," was all the Chief said. Perhaps he didn't believe Sir Charles's disclaimer of authority. Perhaps he thought it was just another excuse for inaction. Lack of materials, lack of money, shortage of staff, higher priorities—Assabassa knew them all. But this time they held the cards and would play them for all their worth. Assabassa stared back at him, relishing every moment that brought him nearer to capitulation.

Sir Charles swore under his breath. The time was really running out now. He cursed himself for coming to this absurd village, and for not having questioned Kofi Duku more closely. But of course the trouble had been that, subconsciously, he had feared to hear anything that would deter him from his stupid fancy. And if he hadn't sat blathering here with these

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OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM



old fools yesterday evening he would have walked to the end of the village and seen the condition of the road and had more time to resolve the dilemma. He might be here for days! And why should he have all his plans upset by such lunatics? Impatience overcame him.

"Bring me some paper," he ordered. If they did the work in half an hour and he drove like blazes he might still make it.

He had a reputation for writing letters that could be otherwise interpreted later. But this was no time for guile. That schoolmaster was pretty shrewd. The whole thing was his idea, probably. So he wrote swiftly to the District Commissioner of Kurakessie South that he was satisfied that Assabassa needed the improvements asked for and that they must be provided without further delay.

The sweat broke out again. It was like writing a dud cheque. The letter lacked all authority and the D.C. could not possibly act on it.

Sir Charles scribbled his signature.

"There! Now get cracking."

The schoolmaster took the letter and gave it to the Chief with a whispered explanation. The old men bent their shaven heads together. In a moment they were all nodding and smiling and jabbering to each other in hoarse undertones. The onlookers caught their sense of triumph and set up an excited chatter. Their faith in the worthless piece of paper was absolute. They saw Assabassa transformed overnight.

SIR CHARLES followed the Chief and his elders across the stony, unkempt ground to the car, accompanied by good-humoured banter from the crowd. The Chief shouted some instructions and immediately a dozen young men appeared from nearby houses, trundling large empty petrol drums which they rolled into the gully, piling them one upon another with a well-practised air. They placed some planks across the drums and grinningly invited Sir Charles to drive over. He guessed at once that this was Assabassa's toll-bridge, for the use of which a fee was exacted from any misguided traveller happening to pass that way.

But no time remained for further recrimination. He sat himself at the wheel, his servants scrambled in as best they could, the car rattled across the improvised bridge and, followed by a loud cheer from the villagers, he drove out of Assabassa at forty miles an hour, bumping violently.

In a few hours that letter of his would be with the District Commissioner of Kurakessie South, and the new Chief Commissioner would hear about it soon afterwards. Then indeed would there be a snatching up of telephones, a shrilling of bells, a stream of

exasperated inquiries all down the line. Where was Sir Charles now? Was he mad? What was the old fool playing at?

Well, he didn't care. He was leaving it all behind. People could say what they liked. But his regrets at his retirement, his pride of achievement, his whimsical affection for Assabassa, had all turned sour. The episode would be on his mind for life, taking the gilt off all his pleasant memories. He would be the laughing-stock of the country, West Africa's best joke for years. That was how they would all remember him.

All except the people of Assabassa. They would curse him.

HE reached the docks with twenty minutes to spare. Dick Armstrong ran up to the car and flung open the door. "By Jove, Charlie old boy, this is a close shave. I've been trying to hold up the ship. What happened?"

"Spot of trouble on the road. Is there time to sling my car on board?"

"Yes, I think so. . . . By the way, I've got to congratulate you."

"Why?" Sir Charles frowned as they walked up the gangway. There was really no need for Strongarm to come on board to see him off. He was in no mood for company.

"I was asked to give you this message, before you left. It came through on the phone this morning. Bootle-Smith's backed out. Not fit or something. You're the new Governor. You'll accept, of course? They want to know at once."

He looked anxiously, and a little doubtfully, at Sir Charles's drawn expression; and Sir Charles read his doubts.

"I don't know." The former Chief Commissioner took a slow turn up and down the deck while the bellboys began shouting "All visitors ashore." He was through. Past it. That was why he had lost his nerve with those people this morning.

And yet—years ago he had put up a scheme for helping forlorn, hopeless villages like Assabassa. The government would supply the materials and technical advice if the people supplied the labour. It had been shot down, of course. But if he had the power . . . and what better place to start on than Assabassa, which had shown such commendable enterprise in helping the new Governor with his car? That letter wouldn't be a joke now . . . his first order, a promise redeemed.

"Tell them I accept." He squared his shoulders. "But I'm going off to have some leave first." He didn't know what his wife would say. She had been pretty well set on packing up. But perhaps she wouldn't mind being a Governor's wife for a year or two. That was another bridge he could cross when he came to it. THE END

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EXAMPLE	[6d.]
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